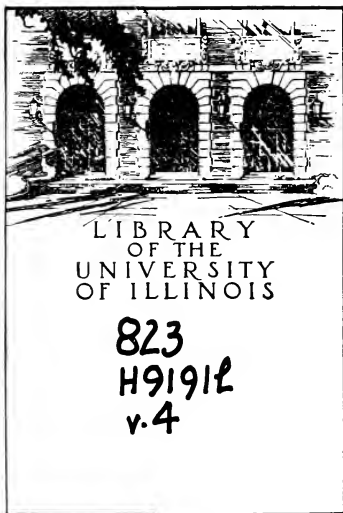


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LADY MACLAIRN,

THE

VICTIM OF VILLANY.

A NOVEL.



IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. HUNTER,
OF NORWICH,

AUTHOR OF LETITIA; THE UNEXPECTED LEGACY; THE HISTORY
OF THE GRUBTHORPE FAMILY; PALMERSTONE'S LETTERS, &c.

VOL. IV.

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1806.

*S. Rousseau, Printer,
Wood Street, Spa Fields.*

LADY MACLAIRN,

THE

VICTIM OF VILLANY.

CHAP. I.

— I WILL not attempt to describe my agitations!—"In order to relieve these emotions," continued he, "I will ease your suspense. I have seen a person who has brought me intelligence of Duncan. A stranger was introduced to me, at a coffee house last night, as wanting to know and speak to me. He announced himself as the super-cargo of a Dutch ship, now in the Thames, and said, that he was charged with a commission for me, by a gentleman whom he had

known at Surinam. I instantly ordered a private room, and he informed me, that he had first seen Duncan at Amsterdam; had there learned enough of his story to pity him; and that he made the voyage to Surinam with him. "His unfortunate condition and deep dejection, during our passage," added this man, "more and more interested my feelings, for one whose education and manners had promised a very different career. I was happily disposed to befriend him; and as, fortunately, I had the means of so doing, for I recommended him to a merchant there, who received him into his counting house. But the fever of the climate seized him before he had been a fortnight on shore. He saw his danger, and had, as it appears, been preparing for it. He gave into my hands the picture of a young lady, which he wore in his bosom, with a parcel, in which he informed me was contained some letters of the lady's, with one for you. He con-

jured me to deliver these to you in person, knowing that our ship was bound to this port on her return. I promised to observe his instructions, and I have only further to add, Sir, that knowing, as I do, the love he cherished for the lady, whom he blessed with his last breath, I think it right to hint to you some precautions in acquainting her with my poor friend's death." "You may suppose I satisfied him on this point," continued my brother, and I endeavoured to sift out of him, whether he knew the whole of Duncan's adventures and secrets. "It was an unhappy business," observed I, "that obliged this unfortunate young man to quit England and his friends, who were able and not indisposed to serve him, had he not been too precipitate: his flight was nearly the death of the young woman in question. You surprise me, by telling me that his attachment for her continued. Did he often speak of her?" "Never,"

replied he, "Nor do I even know her name or address. When, in nearly his last hour, he gave me her picture from his bosom, and said, Mr. Flamall knows for whom it is destined. He will take care to tell the unfortunate injured object of my love, that Charles Duncan has expiated all his errors, by *dying*, and leaving her *free*.—I said, with seriousness, that the most fatal of Duncan's errors had been that of not knowing his best friend; a mistake, however, which had not been shared by the young lady, whose heart he had gained; for, that she still looked up to me for friendship and consolation. Our conversation finished by settling our next meeting for this morning. I have just left him, satisfied, as I believe, that Duncan had in me a friend as generous as himself. There is your picture and this packet of your letters, with one for me, which I have just received from the gentleman. I will leave it for your perusal

when you are able." He quitted me, unable to witness my distress. My Duncan's letter I shall copy.

LETTER LIV.

Charles Duncan to Mr. Flamall.

Surinam, &c.

"BEFORE this reaches your hand I shall be numbered with those in the grave, and appear before that awful Tribunal, at which mercy has her everlasting post. There, and there only, does Charles Duncan expect to find justice; for then alone, will his errors be weighed with his difficulties. Inclosed is my will, in which I have left to *Harriet Duncan, my lawful wife*, the whole and entire property bequeathed to me by Margaret Duncan, my supposed mother, and the only friend I ever knew. I have charged this, my pro-

perty, with the payment of one hundred and fifty pounds to Mynheer Adrian Vandergucht, my last benefactor. This sum has been partly advanced for my necessities; he will, with this, produce my acknowledgment for the receipt of one hundred pounds. I bequeath to him *fifty*, as a debt of gratitude for kindnesses which none can fully repay but his Maker; and to his blessing and mercy do I fervently recommend him."

"From what Mrs. Duncan repeatedly declared to me, and also from your conversations with me, on the subject of my little fortune, I conclude that my wife will receive three thousand pounds as her future provision. It may be, this pittance will be shared by my child. Let it be your care, Sir, faithfully to discharge a trust, for the due performance of which, you will one day be called to a strict account by a Being more to be dreaded than,

"CHARLES DUNCAN."

LETTER LV.

MY letter from my unfortunate Charles contained these words :

“ Forget, my beloved wife, that Charles Duncan ever had existence, or that, in the miserable course of that existence, he has involved yours in his misery, blasted the hopes of your youth, and planted daggers in your faithful bosom. Forget, if thou canst forget, when pressing to thy maternal bosom, the fruit of thy ill-fated union, the wandering, wretched father of thy babe : or with pity and forgiveness think of him, as one at *rest*; rescued from ignominy: concealed from the cruel mockery of scorn; welcoming, at this moment, the approach of his deliverer; and looking forwards with humble hope to an eternity, in which he will be recompensed for the trials of

his mortal state, and pardoned for those mistakes, into which his youth and frailty betrayed him. I enclose the copy of my will, with some of your dear letters : with these you will receive your picture, but I cannot spare it from my bosom, whilst my trembling hand is able to raise it to my lips, or do more than sign the name of thy repentant, yet faithful,

“ CHARLES DUNCAN.”

A time was allowed me for my sorrow, and recovery from a fever of much danger ; but which was, I believe, of use to my general health ; for I certainly was less liable to illness, after this crisis. I experienced something of those sentiments, which the dying Duncan had suggested. I rejoiced that he was at peace ; and considered my fate as ascertained. I could not know more of grief, than I had experienced ; and in a submission, which necessity, and, I hope also, religion enforced, I settled into a calm

and resigned frame of mind. My extreme bodily weakness favoured for a time this more placid condition of my spirits ; and my recovery promised to my tender and assiduous brother, a renewal of his comforts. He soon mentioned Mr. Duncan's donation. He told me, " that knowing, as I did, that both Keith and his wife were dead ; he thought it was much the most prudent measure to let the property remain on the stock books, as it had done from the time of Mrs. Duncan's committing her money and her reputed son to his trust, till such time, as he should become of age. His quitting England within three or four months of his being so," continued my brother, " prevented any settlement or transfer of the stock, but he was mistaken in his opinion of his fortune ; for it amounts to no more than two thousand pounds." I answered with sincerity that I regarded it, whatever it might be, as a common fund ; and should leave to him the dispo-

sal of it as most useful to our common comfort; and being persuaded that I should not live long, I thought it could not be better than as it was. He laughed at my prophetic fears, assuring me that the physician had told him I stood a better chance of being well than when at Kensington; and he left me with a cheerfulness, which soothed me. His attentions did not slacken. He saw with satisfaction my returning activity, and frequently observed, that I was never more beautiful. By degrees he prevailed on my reluctance to visit, and receive his friends; and I as clearly discovered, that my brother wished to see me married, as I manifested a repugnance to the very idea of exchanging my condition for any other. I thus attained my twenty-third year. From this period, the calmness of my mind was disturbed, by the change I perceived in my brother's modes of life. With anguish of soul I discovered, that he

was tired of having a sister without ambition, and a beauty, as she was called, on his hands, who was deaf to flattery, and who scorned infamy, however decorated. I was stiled “a romantic idiot,” “a cold and unempassioned statue, proud of a form that was daily becoming useless.” I became resolute; and told him, that with any form I would endeavour to gain honest bread. My spirit silenced him. He begged my pardon, and pleaded his conviction, that it would be in my power to marry the libertine, whom he had conditioned with on easy terms, though not less profitable to his views. His fears, his regrets at seeing me waste my youth in unavailing sorrow; his belief, that my lover would marry me at the death of an old grandfather; his wishes to do so *secretly*, were placed before me. I relented, though without yielding to his dishonourable views, and all was again peace between us. But I no longer considered

Philip Flamall, as the guardian of a sister's honour. Under this conviction I soon after saw Mr. Flint, for the first time. He came to the house, as it appeared, on business; and finding Philip absent, seemed desirous of waiting for his expected return; he was accordingly conducted to me, as a client of too much consequence to remain unnoticed in the office. His age and respectable appearance, induced me to shew him every mark of respect. I recollected my father's opinion of Mr. Flint and his family; and I tried to please him by my attentions. My guest contentedly maintained his post till my brother returned at the dining hour; fortunately we were alone that day; and Mr. Flint, who accepted at once of the invitation, found only a table at which economy presided; I retired as soon as my office was finished; but I was told that he meant to breakfast with my brother the next morning. Unconsciously I endeavoured to secure to

Philip this wealthy client; and as it will appear, I succeeded.

Some days after, my brother with much seriousness informed me, that my modest and composed deportment had pleased Mr. Flint. "He has not only made his proposals to me of jointuring you in four hundred pounds *per annum*," added he, "but he has also, on hearing the precise state of my fortune, engaged to befriend me, by lending me a sum of money which may turn to good account. He knew my father, and he is no stranger to the difficulties in which he left me involved."—I attempted to speak—"Hear me to the end," pursued he, "before you condemn a brother to a goal. This man's age, his retired habits of life, and his fair character in the world for his uprightness, renders him more an object of veneration than of love. You may recompense him for the protection of the *parent*, by the kind of-

fices of the *daughter*, whilst, by the union he solicits, you are securing to yourself an honourable name and independence, and saving me from ruin ; for I tell you plainly, that I am already in a state of insolvency, in regard to credit. I will have you to consider of the answer you will commission me to give Mr. Flint.” “ It is not necessary to deliberate,” replied I weeping bitterly. “ The knowledge of my real situation will at once convince Mr. Flint, that I am not a suitable companion for his children, nor a becoming choice for him, and without adverting to the folly, which has led him to think of marriage, it will be enough that he knows, that I am *Duncan’s widow*.”

Never shall I forget my brother’s fury ! “ Be a fool to the last !” cried he, “ See me a beggar ! blast my character with your own ! sink me to a level with your highway-robber ! But know,” added he trem-

bling, "that I can be as desperate as your Duncan. I will not be an outlaw for one purse! Can you be so weak as to think any man will marry you, under the name of Duncan? What has this miscreant to do with the present question? He is dead, the witnesses of your *accursed* marriage are dead. You have persisted in bearing your *own name*, and the character of an unmarried woman. Oh Harriet! let me plead for your youth, your helpless condition of fortune; for your innocence, and for a brother who loves you! Marry this worthy man: and let me see you protected from the dangers of the world!" I was subdued. I forsook the path of rectitude, and, as *Harriet Flamall*, married Mr. Flint, who was three times my age.

CHAP. II.

WE quitted London a few days after the ceremony was performed, and I now had leisure to repent of my weakness and timidity. My introduction to my husband's family was humiliating and painful to the last degree of suffering sensibility. I was not only an *intruder*, but I was an usurper of the rights I claimed ; and I felt that, in my assumed title of *Mrs. Flint* was contained a reproach, which covered me with confusion every time I heard it pronounced. My only consolation sprang from the resolution of devoting my life to the man, whom I had thus deceived. He was fond of me, and I studied incessantly to make him contented with his wife. I foolishly began to think that

I should contribute to the slender stock of domestic comfort which I found at Farefield Hall. Mr. Percival Flint, and his amiable sister Mary appeared to treat me as one destined to enlarge their, and their father's happiness : even Miss Flint seemed reconciled to the young *mother-in-law*, who had, in no instance abridged her in her authority. I was fond of flowers, and already began to enjoy the amusement of the garden. Mr. Percival one morning entered my dressing room, where Lucretia and myself were at our needle work, my husband having taken his darling Mary with him in his airing ; his hands were filled with some rare and beautiful plants, and I found that this was a tribute to my peculiar taste. My thanks followed, and Percival withdrew, in order to see the plants properly disposed of. " You have converted," observed Miss Flint with a malicious laugh, " our grave and solemn book-worm into a useful being. What a

thousand pities it is ! that Percival had not seen you before his father :” as the business is now managed he must remain the “ despairing shepherd ;” for I think the public cruelty prohibits the son-in-law from marrying the mother-in-law, who in many cases might console the poor widow. “ My countenance marked how little this levity pleased me.” “ Dear me !” pursued she, “ you need not look so offended, or be displeased with so harmless a joke ; you cannot help Percival’s playing the fool, nor prevent people’s thinking, that the father at seventy is not altogether so handsome as the son at twenty-three or four : you might be tempted to acknowledge this truth yourself were it not for this unlucky relationship ; you could not in conscience deny that he is much better qualified to succeed *Mr. Duncan*, than *his father*.”—I heard no more ; for yielding to terror and surprise I fainted, and my successive fits alarmed the family ; and, as I

supposed, moved to pity the cruel insulter, who had brought them on me. She was very assiduous and attentive to me during the few days of my convalescence ; and with much humility begged my pardon, saying that she had never entertained the slightest suspicion prejudicial to me ; but that having heard of a disappointment of a tender kind, which for a time had injured my health and spirits, she frankly confessed that she had attributed my choice of her father to that cause ; believing that no woman with my beauty, and at my age, would prefer for an husband a man old enough for her grandfather. “ I neither intended to reproach you for that choice, nor to hurt your feelings by naming the gentleman in question,” added she. “ I simply wished to establish between us a confidence and friendship which I conceived might be useful to us both. I have my secrets, my dear Harriet ; and my heart has suffered like your own, the pangs of

unrequited, nay, *abused* love." She proceeded to inform me of Mr. Howard's perfidy, who, after having gained her affections, had voluntarily given himself up to the arts of her sister, who with a pretty face, and the years of a child had basely supplanted her in the opinion of a man, whom she well knew was necessary to her happiness; and who had from her very cradle shown the greatest cunning and address in rendering every one subservient to her will; and she warned me at the same time of her absolute power over my husband.

Subdued by conscience, and uncertain of the extent of the information which Miss Flint had gained, with the knowledge of Mr. Duncan's name, I accepted of her apology; and still further tutored by my brother, passively yielded to an authority, with which I was unable to contend. I tamely witnessed the treatment which

poor Miss Mary received from her enraged and implacable sister, and finally saw the innocent girl ruined in her father's love. My husband was incensed by some letters of Mr. Howard's, which fell into Lucretia's hands ; these were incautiously preserved by the fond girl, and they were certainly such, as Mr. Howard had done much more wisely not to have written. I endeavoured to soften my husband's resentment ; and I should have succeeded ; for he loved his daughter Mary, even, if I may be allowed to speak, to a degree of weakness ; and he was wretched because she was unhappy. He spoke to my brother on the subject, and discovered an inclination to unity and forgiveness, requesting him to employ his influence with Lucretia to give up to a sister a man whom she could not win for herself ; adding, that notwithstanding Mr. Howard had so highly offended him, he would pass over everything for the sake of peace, and to con-

tent poor Mary. My brother instead of executing this commission, sternly warned me to take care of what I was doing. "Were you any thing but what you are," said he, "you would perceive the danger of your interfering with his virago; let her alone: in time you will see her your slave instead of your tyrant. Trust not to the fondness of your husband; you see what she has effected with her father in regard to her sister. Judge of her power by this proof of it, and avoid offending her: you will ruin yourself, and serve no one."

I believe it is not useless to mention here, that on my marriage taking place my brother took his degree as barrister, and quitting his house in Red Lion Square, took apartments in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Whether his former clients forgot him, or he them, I know not; but so it was; he resided almost constantly at the Hall, and became useful to Mr. Flint in return for

the hospitality he found. Confined principally to the care of amusing and nursing my husband, whose health rapidly declined under the perpetual vexations he endured, I could not help perceiving that my influence was sedulously watched; and every time he expressed the regrets he experienced from being prevented seeing his child, I was suspected of having produced those relentings of nature in her favour, and was reproached by Mr. Flamall for my folly in being blind to my own interest; and I was told that I had nothing to do but to attend to my husband. I perfectly understood this language, and I *did* attend to my husband; but it was not to deceive, or insult him. He was too weak to be advised by me; and unhappily feeling at times the state of abject slavery, to which his own weakness had reduced him, he vented his resentments in peevish complaints, and angry reproaches, that I was too passive and indifferent to defend him

against his tormentor ; then, weeping like an infant, he would beg me not to leave him, for that I was his only comfort.

One day he mentioned the disposition he had made of his property, adding, that his children would think of him when he was dead, although they had abandoned him whilst living. “ As to you, my poor Harriet,” said he, “ I have taken care to leave you enough for your ambition, though I can never repay you for the loss of your health, which will be destroyed by your attendance on me. You will find, besides your jointure, a legacy of three thousand pounds, with which you may settle yourself comfortably when they send you from hence : this sum is in your brother’s hands, and he may perhaps recollect when you shew him the bond, that he is in arrears for the interest ever since your marriage. He was a needy man, my Harriet, when I lent him the money, and I

warn you not to trust him with your affairs when I am gone, although he is your brother." That very evening he was seized with convulsions. I pass over an interval of suffering which was terminated by his death.

I will not attempt to describe my astonishment on hearing the deceased Mr. Flint's will read. Let it suffice that its contents were such as astonished every one. My name only appeared in it, as having been provided for at my marriage ; and as it was necessary to specify that the jointure which had so provided for me, was to revert to Miss Flint at my decease, on failure of issue. I retired to my apartment overwhelmed with grief and confusion. Mr. and Mrs. Howard might be said to have haunted my imagination ; I had witnessed their distress on hearing this *unjust* will read ; they were continually before me ; and innocent as I was, I felt my

soul agonised by the internal conviction which pressed upon me, that all was not honourable, yet a suspicion of my brother reached only to another enigma. What was become of the bond ? This question was on my lips more than once ; but Philip had succeeded in making himself more the object of my dread than confidence. To retire from the Hall ; to assert the independence which I had so dearly purchased ; to share with the Howards their father's bounty, were the purposes of my mind, and its support. In the mean time I was treated with unusual respect and attention by Miss Flint, who repeatedly assured me, that the object of her father's affections would always have claims on her own ; that she could not bear to see me so depressed by an event which was to be expected in the common course of nature ; and that if I thought I had not been sufficiently considered for the sacrifices of health and plea-

sure, she was certain that her father's omission resulted from his firm persuasion that we should always share the same abode and domestic comforts. I blushed, and replied, that I had every reason to be contented with Mr. Flint's generosity and affection. "Had the provision allotted me," added I with more spirit, "been only a fourth part of what it is, I should have been satisfied ; for I seek only independence." She looked disappointed, and changed the subject of conversation.

My brother paid me a visit the following morning ; and having in vain requested me to take an airing, grew angry. "Wherefore is it, Harriet," said he with a petulant air, "that you affect to play the Ephesian Matron with me ? It is impossible you can regret the death of a doating, childish old man, worn out by sufferings, at seventy and upwards ? To what purpose this seclusion, this dejection,

these perpetual tears ? One would imagine you had already been entombed long enough ! But there is no remedy for a romantic mind," continued he with more tenderness. " Any other woman but yourself would have resented his want of generosity. You are poorly recompensed, my dear girl, for your watching, and for the loss of your beauty." " I have enough for my wants," answered I, " and much more than I deserved." " I was not of that opinion," replied he, " and soon after your marriage gave Mr. Flint to understand that I thought his widow was but slenderly provided for, unless further considered. He told me that he had thought as I did, and had acted accordingly. He added that you were the only comfort he had in this world ; that he had to thank me for the blessing, and that I should find he had not forgotten my kindness. I have reason," continued Philip, " to think that he kept his word, and destroyed the bond

he held against me ; for it has not appeared." I concealed my face in the sofa-cushion, otherwise he must have perceived my astonishment. " This consideration on his part," continued he, " has been however repaid on mine, for I have been useful to him in my professional way, and never charged him sixpence." I sighed profoundly—" Come," cried he, assuming a more chearful air, " let us now look forward to more pleasing prospects. You may yet be *mistress here*."

I was now told of his intrigue with Miss Flint ; of his unhappily being a married man ; and of the worthlessness of his wife, who exercised over him an empire, in all things save that of bearing his name. In a word, Miss Flint's critical situation was brought forward, and my agency was demanded as the only means of saving her fame, and the infant from the disgrace of an illegitimate birth. I listened to this discourse

with disgust, and even horror ; but, suppressing my feelings, I told him with firmness, that I had gone already too far into concealments, not to discover the danger of the road ; that I meant to quit the Hall, and had already formed my plans for my future life. “ These,” added I, bursting into tears, “ will not, nor can be subservient to your, or Miss Flint’s views.” “ You will change your mind,” replied he sternly, “ when I tell you, that, what you have refused to do from gratitude and affection to a *brother*, may be thought expedient to perform for your own safety. Miss Flint has known the particulars of your first marriage from the day you appeared here as her father’s wife. Moreover she insists upon it, that you have no legal proofs of Duncan’s death, nor any claim to your jointure, from its having been granted under a name and character to which you had no right. You will do well to reflect on her temper, and on your con-

dition, under a prosecution *for bigamy*. My evidence, in your favour amounts simply to the Dutchman's verbal attestation of being at Duncan's funeral, and his letters and will written at Surinam. These with me are conclusive proofs; but I know not how far they would be so thought in a court at Doctor's Commons; nor with what consequences at the best, your marrying when a widow under your maiden name may be attended."—"My punishment is just," exclaimed I, "I will avow the truth, I will not take Mr. Flint's money. I will go where I may mourn my lost happiness and *die*. I ask you only to provide me an asylum for the moment. I will not be a burden to you."—Tenderness was next tried, my ruin involved his; the fate of a child who though yet unborn, was urged with many tears; Miss Flint's generosity to me, her attachment to him were not omitted. I was conquered. "Do with me what you will,"

said I mournfully, “ only remember, Philip, who it was, that spread the toils with which my soul is encompassed ; I cannot live to see you miserable.” He employed much sophistry to convince me that I was engaged in the performance of a meritorious work, inasmuch as it secured innocence from shame, and saved the reputation of Mr. Flint’s daughter : a woman who had respected my secret, and whose gratitude would bind her to me for life.

CHAP. III.

I will pass over the means of deceit and imposition now employed. I became a *nominal mother* to *Philip Flint*, and the measures which had been adopted by removing me to London, in order for my confine-

ment, appeared to have secured Miss Flint's reputation. Thus betrayed by others, I had some palliations to offer to my upbraiding conscience. The innocent being I had adopted as my own, pleaded still more powerfully. I loved him with a parent's love, and I sheltered him from unjust reproach and scorn. In this temper of mind I became acquainted with Sir Murdoch Maclairn. Alas ! in the society of truth and honour I was a dissembler ! How often have I forgotten, whilst listening to his tale of woe, in which all was faithfulness, that *I was a deceiver !* and whilst my heart and tongue spoke his language, that my life had been for months a falsehood, my affections now betrayed me : I loved, and I rashly hazarded the peace and the honour of the man for whom I would have died. I became his wife, and to his noble heart do I appeal : he has found me his *faithful wife*. May I not say yet *more ?* If to have emulated Sir Murdoch Mac-

lairn in his virtues ; if to have loved him supremely ; if to have known no joy in which he has not shared ; if to have shared with co rage his sorrows which were aggravated to me ; by the bitter conviction that I alone deserved to be wretched ; if to have thus acted is to be a wife ; then will Sir Murdoch Maclairn pronounce me his faithful, though erring wife. Witness for me, my beloved son. To my Malcolm do I appeal ; to my support, my only hope in this world ! you have seen your mother's conflicts ; you have shared in her sorrows. Witness for me that I have lived for no other purpose, but to soothe, to watch, to sustain the father whom you love and venerate. One incident which occurred in your early life must be mentioned here. You are no stranger, my son, to the difficulties we had to surmount, in consequence of your father's resolution to leave the Hall, and to reside in France. I have frequently lamented before you this

period of my life. We had, however, so far conquered the opposition to our removal; the time was fixed for our journey, and even our trunks were preparing. Miss Flint saw these preparations with unfeigned grief; for let me be just, she knew me, and she loved me. I left your dear father busily engaged in examining some papers, contained in a cabinet which had been recently sent him from Scotland, and with my work bag, sought the dejected Lucretia. She was alone, in the bow parlour, and weeping; I was employed in consoling her by those arguments which had been a thousand times repeated, when Philip, your uncle, entered, and sullenly took up a book without noticing me. In a few minutes after, your father entered the room, and with a placid air said, "I have brought you something to see, and admire;" and placing a small ebony box richly inlaid with silver on the table before us, he succeeded in exciting our curiosity.

“The casket is nothing to its contents,” said he, smiling at our admiration of the box, and taking from it a shagreen picture-case which he opened. “What say you to this portrait?” said he shewing us a pretty large miniature of a gentleman in a spanish habit; “did you ever see a more manly, gracious countenance?” We examined it, and to the praise due to the artist, and the noble lineaments he had preserved, was added our admiration of the rich diamonds which encircled it. “It ought to have a companion,” observed your father, taking up another shagreen case, similar to the one before us; but it might have been as well if the picture of the lady had never reached my hand; for Harriet may be jealous of its superlative beauty. He added, that the story of the lovers was long and disastrous; and might be the ground work of a tragedy not unlike in many particulars to “the Fatal Marriage.” “I remember,” continued

he, " that when my father many years since shewed me the two pictures, he briefly mentioned some circumstances, which touched me to the soul. He was the friend intrusted with these portraits, and with the care of seeking out an infant son, who had been conveyed from Madrid when no more than three days old ; and who had unaccountably eluded all the enquiries which my father had, at that time, been able to make. "My absence from Scotland, and my father's death with other events," he sighed—" obliterated from my memory this box and the particulars I have mentioned. About a month since, it was sent me, having been deposited by my father previously to his death in the hands of a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, He on his death-bed sent it to me, with many injunctions to be careful of it. Amongst several letters written in Spanish, from which I can only discover the writers to be of high rank, I found also a depo-

sition made by my father, and addressed to myself. He informs me, that having traced, as he believes, the invaluable child of his noble friends, he had sent his mother's picture to the faithful woman who had been the only person privy to his birth, and who passed for his mother. This I was instructed to do, added my father ; and the test of the boy's identity, rested on the woman's returning the picture, with the name of her lady annexed to it. She received it from faithful hands ; for I was already on that bed of death, from which I am permitted to write this. She said she should write to me from London, having in her turn instructions to follow ; and that with the witnesses of her integrity she should present herself before me with her precious charge, and with transports of joy make over to my care a youth worthy of the Duke and Dutchess ; she signed herself S. Duncan. Philip advanced to the table ; he examined the picture atten-

tively. "Does your romance finish here?" asked he, "So it appears," replied my husband, "otherwise that picture, and the letters would have been reclaimed." "I should think no one will at present be found to claim them," observed Mr. Flamall. "I fear so also," answered Sir Murdoch; "but when I am on the continent, I shall lose no opportunity of giving up my important trust to the family." "I would be d—d," cried my brother laughing, "if I went a league out of my road on such an errand!" "Perhaps not," answered my husband coldly; "you may not think it necessary." He folded up the portrait, and, replacing it, withdrew. "What a pity it is," cried Flamall, as he followed him with his eye, "that Maclairn is not a Spanish Grandee! His gravity would have suited admirably with their dignity; and his honour with their pride; some people, and honest ones too, would think the diamonds at least a lawful prize in this case;

and without a doubt, they have long been considered as lost. They would pay for your journey, Harriet, or usefully decorate the *poor* Baronet's *lady*." I made no answer, for I was nearly fainting with emotion and surprise ; but finding Miss Flint well disposed to reply for me, I left the room, and retreated from the scene of altercation which ensued, and which was but too familiar to my ears. Your father's illness succeeded to this occurrence, my dear Malcolm. I will hasten to inform you, and him of the reasons which led me to give this incident a place in my narrative.

It is now something more than five years since, that I was called upon to feel the full weight of the penalty affixed by eternal justice, to the violation of truth and rectitude of conduct. In the duties before me, the remembrance of the unfortunate Duncan had been softened down into the placid hope of his being at peace.

Miss Flint had apparently forgotten that such a being had ever existed. A more immediate concern engaged her mind, and from her excessive fondness of her son, grew up a dislike to you, and a jealousy of your mother, which harassed me and rendered her unhappy. Several circumstances, which I need not recall to your memory, proved to her, that the slave of Mr. Flamall, and her own sheltered dependent, was not without the animal instinct of defending her offspring; and even in these contests, the name of Duncan never escaped her lips. This generosity was not lost upon me, who had to sustain the cruel and barbarous hints, not unfrequently dropped by my brother, in regard to a subject, too painful to be enlarged upon; and which produced no other effect, than that of making me, more and more, the inmate of your father's apartment.

I had, as usual, seen my beloved patient quietly tasting that repose which his agitated mind required; and I left him, to take my accustomed walk in the avenue. A radiant moon, with the soft evening breeze, which had succeeded to a sultry day, cheered me, and I sauntered until you met me on your return from your friends at the farm. We enjoyed the scene around us; and, for some time, conversed at our ease, on the seat round the oak, but hearing the turret clock chiming the three quarters after ten, I rose to return to the house; when suddenly, a wretched looking man, sprang from the covert near us, and ran with swiftness down the avenue. You instantly dissipated my alarm, by telling me it was a sick sailor, whom you had met and relieved that afternoon, on your way to Mr. Wilson's. He had, it appeared, been ship-wrecked, and was begging his way to his friends in London. You finished

your little story, by adding, that you supposed he had strolled into the avenue, and had fallen asleep. We parted for the night, and I thought no more of the mendicant sailor. The following evening I again repaired to the avenue, it was about eight o'clock, and again I took my seat at the oak. Again, did I see this miserable object slowly advancing towards me ; his ghastly countenance excited my compassion, not my fears, and I rose to meet him, with some silver in my hand. He stopped, leaning himself against a tree ; and wiping his face, as though faint with hunger, gazed upon me. " Do not advance," cried I, quickening my pace, " honest friend I am coming to give you a trifle." He groaned, dropped a sealed packet, and darted from me with speed.

Terrors too powerful for language assailed me ! I gasped for breath, and, for some minutes, stood motionless, gazing

at the fleet and dreadful spectre ; for such he seemed. At the stile he turned ; and from its elevation still saw me, he struck his breast and head ; then vanished. A sudden conviction, shot through my confounded senses ; I seized the parcel ; it was addressed to Lady Maclairn, and in the well remembered characters of *Charles Duncan*. I placed it in my bosom ; and was, I believe, indebted to the air for the preservation of life ; for I did not faint, although unconscious of time. Your cheerful voice, Malcolm, as you approached me singing, roused me, and I attempted to rise ; but again I sunk on the seat I had quitted, and burst into tears. You saw my emotion, my dear son, and in reply to your enquiries I made the usual answer, for the dejection of my spirits, adding, that I had again seen the vagabond in the avenue, at a distance, and not chusing to advance, had kept near the house, not altogether without fear. “ I

met him," returned you, "and told him that he was trespassing, and that he must not be seen in the avenue. He said, he hoped he should be many miles from it in twenty-four hours, meaning to pursue his route before sun-rise the next morning. He begged my pardon; he had been induced to seek the relief his miseries needed, but finding the lady was alarmed had retreated. I commended him for his attention, and rewarded him with some silver." "He has done me no harm," replied I, "for I was not much disposed to ramble, feeling languid before I left the house." I was no sooner arrived there, than I retired to my room; and with agonies, which it is beyond my power to describe, I read as follows,

"To Lady Maclairn."

"THE poor, the outraged, the vilified Charles Duncan lives to proclaim his wrongs! to pour forth his sorrows before

the only being on earth who will pity him ! He lives to redeem his honour from the disgrace and eternal infamy, of having deserted the woman, whom in the presence of his Maker, he vowed to cherish and protect. He lives to take vengeance on his oppressors ! He lives to behold thee once more ! and then death will close his account here ! The grave will be his bed of repose ! Heaven will, in its own time, explain to him, wherefore he existed ; and to what purpose he has suffered ! ! !

“ I am composed, my Harriet. I have seen thee, I have heard thy gentle voice ! listened, in breathless silence, to the pure effusions of thy spotless mind ; heard my Harriet, my wife, my *all* that Heaven has given me ! speak to *her son*, praise his filial duty *to his father* ; heard that that parent had been *smitten*, stricken by the hand of adversity ! Heard her call him,

“her dear *Maclairn*,” her helpless, her unfortunate husband ! Was this the language to heal my broken spirit ? No : but it was that which has fettered every tumultuous passion of my soul ! I would not for worlds speak to you, Harriet ; I would not for worlds approach you ! No : I would refuse your offered love ! What ! brand with infamy thy spotless name ! Sink the honourable wife, the virtuous mother to be the sharer of my wretched condition ! The companion of a reputed robber, a worthless vagabond ; of a being who can claim no affinity but to the earth he treads ! No ; Harriet, thy Duncan is not yet so poor, so abject ! Scorned, and sunk as he may be in your eyes, he yet proudly maintains his claims to the recompense of long suffering and patience. This is not Duncan’s theatre of glory ! But he has before him an inheritance, and a home ; and he has only to press forward to attain it.

“ The wife of Sir Murdoch Maclairn ; the mother of his children ; the prop and comfort of his life is in my eyes, encompassed by an host of angels. Shall the wretched Duncan invade the blessings of another ? No, Harriet. He has beheld you for the last time. Live and die a suitable inhabitant for a better world ! *Live* to be revered by your children’s children ! *Live* to be called the Matron’s pride, and your sex’s boast. Only think of me, as a man who was once thy love ; as one incapable of forgetting you. Think of me as one, who would sooner have been what he has been cruelly believed to be, than have basely left thee to the tortures of doubt and suspense, and abandoned to an insulting world. Think of me only as an unfortunate man, as one whom you *may* pity, as one who will soon be removed : as one whose heart——

“ Again I take up my pen. Again the tumult of my senses is calmed. I can now

weep. I can thank God that your brother is absent. I can pray, my Harriet ! I can see the God of mercy allaying the storm, and smoothing my passage to himself. *Farewell* : I have only to see, that you are in possession of my justification ; and then shall seas again separate us, whilst my soul still fondly clings to thee. Farewell ! Farewell !

“ CHARLES DUNCAN.”

“ You have not forgotten the hour of our separation, Harriet ! You cannot have obliterated from your memory my agonies, on trusting to the winds and waves my wife, my hopes, my all ! You cannot have forgotten my vows of love, of fidelity, of truth. What must have been the artifices, the machinations employed to beguile you of your confidence in Charles Duncan ! But have I not before me an evidence of that subtle mischief which man, when lost to all that is manly, can

effect? Was thy innocence a match for villany? Thy weakness an armour against cruelty? What have not been the means employed to ruin *thee* as well as myself! Oh Being of infinite justice! to thee do I look up for a solution of all my doubts! Let me still hold fast my only consolation; my Harriet, my wife stands blameless in thy sight, and in my bosom. She is still cherished as the faithful, but deluded, perhaps fatally deluded, victim of baseness and cruelty.

“ Again farewell !”

This letter had evidently been written after my alarm in the avenue by the wretched writer's sudden disappearance. His narrative was detached from it, and bore several dates, as will appear; may heaven in its mercy lend a portion of its never-failing compassion to those to whom the miserable Harriet now consigns it! May they pause from time to time, and

contemplate the *noble ruin* thus exhibited to their view ! For Maclairn's justice will acknowledge it to be *such* ; and he will applaud the woman, who, although shrinking from the consciousness of guilt, dares to avow her veneration, and love for virtue. She must indeed be sunk, who could erase from her memory a man like *Charles Duncan* ; and Maclairn will understand and fret, that the heart would be unworthy of his, which should not have room for suffering and oppressed innocence, and a memory faithful in its tribute of sorrow and sympathy, gratitude and admiration, for a man, who not only loved her, but also her fame, better than himself. Yes : he will acknowledge that his Harriet, even in these tears, which she gives to suffering and departed worth—but let me hasten to the conclusion of a task which duty prescribes, before my sinking spirits faint.

CHAP. IV.

*Charles Duncan's Narrative.**London.*

I will be calm. Is it fit for a wretch *like me* to flinch at the sight of inanimate objects? To tremble, and faint in a *street*, because once trodden by my feet, when youth and health glowed in my cheek, and hope in my bosom? Is it *for me*, familiar with misery, to droop at the view of that abode in which I once for a moment grasped the fleeting form of happiness, gazed on her image, and fixed her lineaments on my heart, and then I saw her vanish? No: Duncan ought to have a soul braced, an arm nerved for the work before him.

His Maker has not forgotten the work of his hand. He will triumph, *even in this world!* Oh memory, unfold thy tablets! Show to my injured wife the man she loved, the man she has wept as worthless! —and then!!—

Is it needful for me to recall to my Harriet's recollection, our mutual doubts of Flamall's honour and principles; as these appeared in his conduct to me, they were grounded on his evading every enquiry I made relative to the deceased Mrs. Duncan's effects and papers. But I had still more convincing proofs of his real character than I discovered to his sister. I saw, that in his professional line, he had few clients of respectability, and that he was a rascal. Determined on *my* conduct as soon as I could legally call on him to account for his, I simply declared to you my purpose of quitting his house the day I should come of age; and you concurred in this plan. Is it necessary to remind

you of those tender fears and apprehensions which resulted from our union ! Oh no ! you cannot have forgotten them, nor my arguments for your immediately leaving a house, in which you were subjected to perpetual alarms. You will also recollect, that we both believed our liberality to the Keiths had bound them to our interest ; particularly Mrs. Keith, who had gratefully acknowledged my gift of Mrs. Duncan's apparel, and the little advantages which her slender purse derived from her being my laundress.

Passing near her house one morning, just before you left London with your friends, the Hatchways, a dray-man so completely bespattered me, that, in order to shun the laughter of the diverted witnesses of this mischance, I took refuge at Mrs. Keith's : knowing that I could there change my linen, &c. During her kind offices about me, I observed, that she had been weeping ; and, whilst waiting for my

coat to dry, her dejection led me to ask her what had disturbed her. "Only the old story," answered she, weeping anew, "I am weary of my life; my husband was never good; but of late he is a brute, and beats me, because I cannot go to market without money. God help me, I am too honest for Patrick!" "He ought to husband his money better," replied I, "he is in constant employment with Mr. Flamall I find, and he is a good copier." "He will never find that any thing he gains from that quarter will thrive," answered she, colouring with resentment; "the good old proverb is against him. What is got by the devil's means will go as it came." "You ought not to blame Mr. Flamall," observed I, prolonging my toilet, "that he cannot teach your husband to take care of the money he earns: Flamall is not a spendthrift." "He is too cunning for you to understand," replied she, nodding her head significantly, "but he

will soon show the cloven foot ; what is to become of you, when your wife wants a cradle for her poor babe ? Patrick swears that I shall not take her in : the Lord help you both ; there will be such doings, and no Mrs. Duncan to stand by you with her purse !” “ I defy Mr. Flamall,” answered I, “ and will soon let him know that I can protect my wife ; in less than four months I shall be master of my dear mother’s little provision, and with that, and industry, my Harriet shall have a cradle for our infant.” She shook her head despondingly, “ Poor soul !” said she ; “ it is perhaps happy for her that she is removed, she loved you better than many *real* mothers do their children ; it would have grieved her to see you set fast so young.” “ How came you to know this secret ?” asked I, without betraying my emotions. “ Because I heard Mrs. Duncan say, that she was not your mother,” answered she, “ when she gave her dying instructions to

your *honest guardian* with the pocket book for you, in case you outlived her : besides this, I could say more if I pleased ; but I do not wish to bring Patrick to the gallows, he will find the road without my help ! see his tender marks," added she, weeping, and uncovering her bosom. It was bruised. My compassion soothed her ; but she became more guarded ; and only confessed that I had not been well used, adding, " I have said enough to you, and should my husband know it, he would murder me. But the time may come, when you will be able to take care of me. I have not forgotten the black pocket book, nor the letters on it, studded with silver, nor what is more, the bank notes it contained. I know that *ten hundred make a thousand*, as well as the lawyer. Betty Keith is neither deaf nor blind." In vain did I urge her to be more explicit. " So I will, when I am upon oath," answered she ; " but you can do nothing at present,

and you must be gone. My husband may return, and he will suspect I have been *prating*, as he calls it, when I do but turn the tongue in my head." I took the hint, and giving her a guinea, left the room. You were on the eve of your little voyage, ill and dejected, and I forbore to add to your inquietude. Your departure followed, and Duncan's fate advanced to the crisis which terminated his hopes and prospects *in this world*. A few days passed. My bosom was relieved of its fears for your safety ; you wrote in spirits ; and you concurred in your second letter, in my plan of removing you from Y——th to the north ; and from thence declaring your marriage to your brother. At this juncture I received an anonymous letter ; it was dated from Helvoetsluys, the language English, with foreign idioms. The writer signified that he was deputed by my parents to inform me, that the mystery in which my birth had been involved was removed ;

but for many cogent reasons, which should be explained, he was commissioned to meet me at Harwich; that he should perhaps be there as soon as his letter; but at all hazards in a few days, and should wait my arrival at the Ship inn. "Be only anxious," added he, "to be punctual to this rendezvous. Measures for your future destination in the world will result from this interview. Be on the reserve with those about you, and above all, trust not the man who calls himself your guardian; he has an eye over him which he little suspects, and he will have an account to settle, not with the *obscure* and *friendless* Charles Duncan, but with an arm of power, which shall crush him, as the spoiler of the widow and the orphan."

You will imagine that my whole soul was fixed on accomplishing the journey to Harwich. It so entirely engaged my thoughts, that I spoke of my intention to

Simons, saying I should ask Mr. Flamall for a week or ten days holiday, in order to meet a friend at Harwich. "He will refuse you," replied he, "for he wants you in the office to supply his own absence. He can find leisure for his own jaunts; but he thinks not of us." "I will not be refused," replied I eagerly, "then do as I do in such cases," said he; "Send your trunk off before you, and take a French leave when you can, in order to bring home your portmanteau: there will be no end of his objections!"

I availed myself of Simons's counsel, and sent a small portmanteau to the Harwich coach that evening. On the following morning I civilly requested your brother to spare me ten days or a fortnight, explaining to him my wishes in part, by saying, that I expected to meet a friend at Harwich, and we should probably make a little excursion together. Good God, how delightful were my prospects! for

these were bounded by seeing you and announcing my parents to you ! Some questions, for which I was prepared, followed : reluctance gradually yielded. “ He thought it but an idle expence ; but I had been frugal, and therefore he should not refuse me ; ” and, opening his desk, he paid me my quarterly stipend of twenty guineas, which had been due nearly a month. He soon after told Simons, that he was going with a party of friends to Windsor, and should not return for a day or two ; then carelessly asking me, when and how I intended to journey, he left us ; shaking me by the hand, and with a Judas’s smile, he bade me “ remember that my purse had not the virtue of Fortunatus’s.” Simons boasted much of a horse which a friend of his let out ; and so strongly pointed out to me the advantages of travelling in this mode, that I went with him to the livery stable, in order to see the animal thus recommended. It had

been a fine one; but had been ridden down, and I should have given up my project of riding on horseback but for his persuasions. He was certain the beast would travel well with me, and return better than when he set out; the terms were easy, and to please Simons, I consented to please his friend, the proprietor of the horse. Amongst the various arguments he used was one, which had probably turned the scale. I could run down to Rumford that night; the horse had been at the manger the whole day, and the remainder of the road to Harwich was light work. This project was adopted; but a heavy rain stopped me for some hours; and it was nine o'clock in the evening when I mounted and parted with my officious friend at the livery stable. The clouds were dispersed, and the moon, though not in her zenith, favouring me, I proceeded on gently. The horse was stiff with fatigue, and I found that Si-

mons had "taken me in," to use his own quaint language. I was within half a mile of Woodford, a village on the Epping road, when I was accosted by name, by a man whom I recollected having seen once or twice in your brother's office. He checked the bridle, and civility obliged me to stop. Enquiries after Mr. Flamall's health, were followed by wondering to meet me so late on such a road. "I may wonder in my turn," answered I, for you have more to apprehend from this damp evening than I have. But you will excuse me, I am hastening to Stretham, still some miles from hence. I spurred my horse and bowing, wished him a good night. He shouting after me, "Look to your pistols, young man." I had pistols with me, but I needed them not. I proceeded unmolested in my journey till within a mile of Rumford; when the miserable beast I rode making a trip, fell; and I received a contusion on my knee, that, for a time,

prevented my rising, and totally disabled me from mounting again. With much difficulty I reached an inn at Rumford, leading the horse, and in my wish to find shelter, I became indifferent to accommodations. I took the first house that was open, and found, with civility, a bed, to which I instantly repaired. The next morning I found the injury I had received too serious to allow me to prosecute my journey, without hazard, on Simons's vaunted horse. I therefore sent the beast home, with a note to Simons, mentioning my accident, and the necessity I was under of pursuing my journey in a post chaise, as it was absolutely my purpose to be at Harwich on the Saturday. My hostess, had, in the mean time, with much humanity applied her infallible nostrum to my knee; and, on my quitting her the following day, she generously insisted on my taking some of the ointment with me, assuring me, that by being repeated, it

would relieve not only the tumour, but the pain. In this point, she was however mistaken, and, on reaching the appointed inn at Harwich, I could not stand on my legs. The waiter, who assisted me into the house, asked me, whether my name was Duncan ; and being answered in the affirmative, he proceeded to tell me, that a person had called twice, within the hour, to enquire for me. Not doubting but this was my incognito friend, and that he would return to the house, I ordered him to be conducted to me, and dismissed the man for some coffee. During this interval of suspense and curiosity my knee solicited my attention ; it was extremely painful, and I had recourse to my Rumford landlady's specific for a bruise. Whilst employed in applying most assuredly what most assuredly augmented the evil, the door of the apartment was suddenly opened ; and to my inconceivable surprise Simons hastily entered. " You are come

at last," said he with an oath, "I have been on the rack these two hours." "And I for near four and twenty," replied I, interrupting him, and directing his attention to my employment; "but what brings you hither?" He grasped my hand with eagerness, and in a low voice told me, that he came to save my life. I laughed, I believe, for he swore most horridly, and concluded by saying, that he had not time to see me play the fool. "The person," added he, "commissioned by your father to meet you here, is no stranger to me. Let it suffice, I am in his secret. He is, it may be, at this instant dying at Helvoetsluys of a fever, and I am ordered to conduct you there to him; all is prepared; and you must go this instant on board the packet. There is not a moment to lose." I hesitated, for I thought of my Harriet; but he urged me with a vehemence that confounded my deliberations; and concluded by saying, that my

honour, and even my life, depended on my following him. With his help and a porter's I was conveyed to the water-side, and there found the boat, in which we reached the packet, then, getting under sail, I threw myself on the bed reserved for me, subdued by the pain in my knee, and soon after was seized with the sea-sickness. I saw no more of my companion that night: and learned that, fearing to share in the common malady, he preferred being on deck. It was with difficulty that I supported myself to the public-house at the Sluys; but overcome, as I was, with pain, I failed not to remark, that Simons spoke the Dutch language fluently. "It is well I can," answered he roughly to my observation, for your friend is not here; we must proceed to Rotterdam; and you must bear up as well as you can; the passage-boat is an easy conveyance for you. This boat was shared by others as well as ourselves; and with an irritation of mind,

as great as my bodily sufferings, we proceeded to Rotterdam; and on reaching the hotel, I fainted. On recovering my senses, which had been suspended for some time, I saw a well dressed man engaged in giving me succour, and I concluded that this was the person I was to meet. On asking Simons whether he was the dying man I had been led to expect, he answered, that he was a surgeon, and that my knee required some better remedy than I had applied. I submitted to his orders, and was carried to bed. At length Simons was at leisure to satisfy my curiosity. He began the subject himself, by observing with some ill-humour that it was unlucky—I omit the epithets, my Harriet, with which he interlarded even his expressions of kindness, that, what with the indisposition of my friend, and my accident, which he found from the surgeon would unavoidably detain me some days in my bed, he should

be forced to prolong his stay. I have written to Amsterdam," continued he, "where I find the sick man was advised to remain; to-morrow or the next day, we shall have letters." Need, I say, in what manner this interval was filled up by me! I wrote you a circumstantial account of these various events; and the fond wish of making my Harriet easy under a separation so unexpected, imparted to my bosom a portion of those hopes which were necessary for her support as well as mine. This letter I intrusted to the surgeon's care, not chusing to employ Simons. I made him comprehend, that it was of importance to me; and, with a good-natured smile, he satisfied me, that he would faithfully discharge his trust. It was under cover to Mrs. Keith. Too fatally certain is it, that you never saw this letter! In the mean time, my soul was on the rack, from having no intelligence of you. Again, and again, I wrote to Mrs. Keith, and to you. I had no letters, and I began to suspect the sur-

geon had given Simons my letters, instead of putting them into the post-office. In the mean time his attention to my accommodations and health had nothing in them to surprize me; for he constantly talked of his being commissioned by the gentleman at Amsterdam, to be careful of his "*precious charge*," and sometimes he translated passages from his letters expressive of the importance of my person, and his anxiety in not being in a state to attend me himself. I was now on crutches, and free from pain; and I was told that it was proper for me to proceed to Amsterdam. I decidedly refused, saying that I was determined to return to England; and he might inform his correspondent of my resolution, it being indispensibly necessary for my peace, to have news from thence. "I will furnish you with a newspaper," said he gravely; "that will, I trust, make you change your mind; but it may not be amiss to prepare you for *news* that will

surprise you more than you are aware." He began his narrative of the highway robbery charged on me, and finished by placing before me the article in the day's paper, which, with a detail of the particulars, included a description of my person, situation, and even the initials of my name, and of the master with whom I served as clerk. You will judge, my Harriet, of the effect which this intelligence produced. I solemnly swore that no power on earth should prevent my immediately appearing and confronting the base and false accuser. "You know best," replied Simons, "the proofs with which you can invalidate this man's positive oath." But I would advise you rather to secure such a condition of fortune, as will of itself, with nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, prove that you are slandered. In a word," continued he, with a serious air, "I have had my instructions from those, who will take care of your honour better

than you are able to do yourself. Your parents are rich and powerful, and, trust me, more than *one* will be called to a strict account for their conduct in regard to you." I was still resolved on my measures; for my wife's deplorable condition solely engaged me. "It is well, Sir," observed he, with a tone of authority, "I shall proceed without you, and even if it be necessary to Cadiz, and inform your noble parents, that you preferred a *gibbet* to them. But you are a simpleton, Duncan," added he, with more kindness, "I know your motive for this headstrong folly. Will your appearance, and the charge which will be brought against you, lessen the distress of the girl you love?" I started. "I know more than you think of that business also," continued he; "and I advise you to write to her, and instantly make your way to your parents. You will then be able to offer her the protection she needs." I burst into tears, and

reproached him with having stopped my letters. He vehemently denied the charge ; adding, “ that he pitied Miss Flamall, and was better pleased to serve her than to injure her.

Unable to extract more from a man who hourly assumed with me more of *respect* as well as of *authority*, I yielded to his control. I was still lame and helpless ; and except the diminished sum with which your brother had furnished me, I had no resources for my premeditated plan. Simons soothed me, by conducting me to the post-office, where I deposited a letter for you, and his orders taken, to forward all letters to our address at Cadiz, to a house of business sufficiently ostensible to gain him attention with the people at the office. We prepared immediately for our departure for Amsterdam, when he entered the apartment with an opened letter in his hand. “ I thought how it would be,” said he, “ your cursed accident, and the de-

lay it has occasioned will oblige me to go the whole voyage with you. Your father's agent is too ill for the voyage ; he has sent me bills of "exchange ;" he displayed the notes, and urged me to lose no time. He is, I find, in the country ; and dangerously ill. However, I am embarked, and will not desert you. At Amsterdam I was again surprised. This *Proteus* spoke the Spanish tongue well, and in his conversation with the captain of a Spanish ship bound for Cadiz, I perceived that he assumed the gravity and stateliness of a Spanish grandee. On the man's leaving us, after having settled the terms for our accommodation, I mentioned my surprise, on finding him so qualified for a traveller. " I lived on the continent some time in my young days," answered he. " I was private secretary to an ambassador, who in his lack of brains, forgot to pay me for the five years use he made of mine ; he taught me a lesson however which I wanted," continued he with a malicious grin,

“namely, to live by my own wit; and to regard every man either as a fool or a knave.” It required very little judgment, my dear Harriet, to determine the class to which Simons belonged; yet in spite of his habitual vulgarity, and coarse language, I hourly perceived that he had moved in a different sphere, and could at his pleasure assume the gentleman. He spoke of me as a Spaniard by birth, and by the respect he showed me, taught those about me to consider me as of importance; performing the part of my governor; and making no secret of my having been a stranger to my rank, parents, and country, from nearly the hour I was born. These hints were needless, to stimulate a curiosity constantly on the fullest stretch. To my questions I received only one answer: “I am bound to secrecy, and it is for *my interest* to be faithful. Have patience, time will discover all to you.” Thus goaded on, and convinced of my inability of securing him

in my interest ; having exhausted my own little stock of money, and depending, in a strange country upon Simons for pecuniary assistance, I left Amsterdam without having received letters from you ; and in the anguish of my soul I sought relief from the hope of meeting with protection, and being placed in a situation to succour you ; for I made no doubt of your brother's interference with your wishes to write to me. Our navigation was for a time pleasant. The gentle breezes which filled our sails soon exempted me from sea sickness ; rest restored my knee, and my hours were beguiled by my assiduously studying the Spanish language ; for which, Simons having proposed it for my amusement, I had purchased a few needful books.

At this period, however, one incidental cause of sorrow was added to my oppressive burden. Two or three days after your departure from town, I had begun to bathe, trusting to its relieving me from a portion, at least, of that languor which I experi-

enced ; and, cautiously guarded in all that related to my Harriet, had taken your picture from my bosom, and placed it in my port-folio with your letters, which I carefully kept locked in a large trunk, with articles that were not of every day's use. I had seen on reaching Helvoetsluys that this trunk made the greatest part of our baggage ; and on noticing it to Simons, he replied, that he expected my thanks for his zeal in my service in bringing it, as he supposed it was kept as lumber in my room, and that I should have no objection to a change of linen. To this necessity I had been hitherto a stranger, and the trunk remained corded till I was settled in my cabin on board the Spanish ship. The treasure it contained was too precious to be forgotten. I searched for it in vain. Neither your letters nor your portrait were to be found. I did not conceal my suspicions, nor my distress from Simons, who as usual, with the most horrid

imprecations affirmed that he had not opened the trunk ; nor had any other motive in removing it, but that of contributing to my comforts and amusement, knowing that I had some books in it. To contest with Simons was a vain attempt. I was silenced, and bore this trial, to use my master's words like a " whining puppy." Yet in spite of himself I perceived that he had an interest in preserving my health and tranquillity, and that he never ceased to recommend to me patience ; hinting continually that I should soon be in a condition to take ample vengeance on those who had injured me, and to protect you, who had been so unjustly dealt with. These conversations with his avowed good will for you, and pity for me had their effect.

We were within thirty or forty leagues of our post when we were boarded by a large, well-armed Algerine corsair, and taken without resistance ; for such was

the inferiority of our force, that it was not possible for us to escape. Surprised and confounded by an event for which I was altogether unprepared, my compassion was notwithstanding exerted in comforting my terrified companion. I strove to encourage him by the same hopes which had calmed my own spirits ; and with confidence I assured him, that as subjects of Great Britain we should be enlarged at Algiers ; and that we had only to apply to the British consul resident there, in order to be protected. In this expectation we were cruelly disappointed, by the measures which the pirate pursued ; who from motives we could not fathom, after having treated me with extraordinary lenity, and Simons without rigour, landed us with great circumspection during the night at some distance from the harbour ; and to our amazement and consternation we were, with our chests, placed in a covered vehicle not unlike a waggon, and without loss of

time conducted up the country. We were manacled and vigilantly concealed from every eye by those who were charged with us; who still maintained their claims to our gratitude, by offering us no violence or harshness. I had not been much surprised at seeing Simons relapsing into the pusillanimity he had betrayed in the first moments of our capture; but I was astonished to find that, with his grief for himself and the most bitter execrations on his folly, he bemoaned my hard fate in terms which I little expected from him. "Take courage," said I, willing to relieve his sorrow, "you have nothing to reproach yourself with in this misfortune, and I am sorry, that your good intentions and zeal for my service have led you into this difficulty; but we may yet find the means of applying to the consul, or purchasing our freedom. Do not despair." "I must," replied he with a look of horror, "I have been a d—d rascal, and your destruc-

tion, my poor boy. If you were to forgive me, God never will ; and this is only the beginning of my punishment." He wept in agonies, and I was alarmed. " I can neither be useful to you, nor yet forgive you," observed I, desisting from my ineffectual attempts to soothe his agitations, " 'till I am more in your confidence. Tell me what have you done to injure me, and trust to my principles, which command me to forgive an offending brother." " By G—d," exclaimed he, " this is too much ! I cannot bear it, villain as I am ! But you shall know all ; and you shall see that at least I never intended to harm you, though it is but too true that my business in your concerns was to serve myself."

CHAP. V.

Charles Duncan's Narrative continued.

I Will not, my dear Harriet, attempt to give you, in the language of a reprobate, the confession of one; let it suffice, that I faithfully communicate to you, the information which he, in the course of our three days journey, poured into my appalled ear; and when his recital is cleared from his oaths, it will be as follows: "You may date your ruin," said he, "from the hour you were at Grantham, in your way to London with Mrs. Duncan, your supposed mother." I started. "Let me at once tell you," observed he, "that I know more of your history than you do yourself; therefore do not interrupt me. You met there a very handsome courteous

lady, who took the coach with you from thence; she called herself Mrs. Peachley; she is Flammall's wife, and sister to Keith. You know her kindness in recommending your mother to Keith's lodgings. Your indisposition on the journey was declared the following day. You could not rise, and Mrs. Duncan, with much alarm, recommended you to Mrs. Keith's care, and lamented the necessity which forced her from your bed-side, for an hour or two, having an appointment which could not be delayed. At her return, she found you much worse, and a physician was summoned. For several days and nights this good mother of yours never left you. You were every hour nearer the grave; and overcome by her fatigue and terror, she got the start of you; for she was dead and buried before your eight and twenty days fever had fairly left you. During this time, when you were, for the greater part, more fit for Bedlam, or for your cof-

fin, Mrs. Duncan was kindly visited by Mrs. Peachley, who, having called to see her relations, discovered that she had found a prey worth pursuing; and finding that her brother had inmates not likely to cavil at the price of his lodgings, she redoubled her attentions, by several times calling on Mrs. Duncan, to enquire after you, and, as she said, to see that the Keiths were assiduous in their attendance. Your poor mother, who knew not a being in London; but the person she had met the day of her arrival, and who was out of town, mentioned, with extreme distress, that in an hour of such difficulty, she had the additional misfortune of finding, that her only friend had left London and was gone abroad. This confidence became more enlarged; in proportion as your danger was more imminent. She incessantly lamented the absence of this Mr. Joseph Jago; and in her illness, she consulted Mrs. Peachley, on the means she should

take to secure to you the little property which her death would give you in case you survived her. Mr. Flamall's good offices were employed; and she made her will, which was witnessed by her two doctors. You were left to Mr. Flamall's care, and your money into the bargain, until such time as his trust should be set aside by your natural guardians, who lived abroad; or until you were of age, in case these relations did not appear. Hitherto all went well, but Keith's wife, either from hatred of her sister, or the spirit of contradiction common to her, thought it a good opportunity of acting like an honest woman; she was careful of you during your delirium; and also attentive to your poor mother. Your generosity when you left her house for Mr. Flamall's, confirmed her good dispositions towards you. I had not been without my suspicions, that the cautions which kept me in *the back ground* all this time, were not used without solid rea-

sons. Flamall, however, in the executive trust, which had thus devolved on him; brought home with him on the night of the funeral, some papers which belonged to the deceased Mrs. Duncan, in order for their better security as he said, and he then mentioned you and your condition, adding, that he did not think you could survive your mother; and that he had no clue to any of your connexions. He spoke of your little property in the funds; and the suspicion he entertained, that Mrs. Duncan was not your real mother. "Why do you not examine her letters?" asked I. "I have," answered he; "but they are written in Spanish; and I do not wish to have this young man's story published unnecessarily; if he live, he may be able to give an account of himself, and if he die they must be translated." "I am able to do that," replied I; "and it may be prudent to know the ground you tread." Flamall understood the tone with which

this observation was made, and he gave me three or four letters from a pocket book, which he said, the defunct had in her trunk, and which constituted all the papers, that could lead to an explanation of a secret, which she had too long deferred to communicate. I shall only notice to you," continued Simons, "those passages which struck me the most. Two or three of the letters contained little more than most tender expressions of maternal affection; and the most pathetic description of the writer's hopes and fears, as these related to you. One of a later date informed Mrs. Duncan that Jachimo de Castros had been summoned by the Duke to ———, his agency being more important there, than in England; that his services were supplied by the orders he had left with a *tried friend*, Joseph Jago, a merchant in the Minories, to whom she was to apply in every exigency, and who would forward her letters. Another, of a

later and recent date, was still more important, but it was like the oracles of old to me. Joy dictated the broken sentences. Much was said of a picture which heaven in its mercy had placed in Mrs. Duncan's hands. Joseph Jago would supply her with a thousand pounds. "Her *Henrico*" was to be cautiously introduced to a knowledge of a mother, whose miseries were forgotten, in the hopes of clasping her son, her long lost blessing, to her bosom. "Spare no expence for the masters he may yet need," adds the writer, "it must be yet some months before all is ready for his appearance here; when, with an exultation, the thoughts of which transports me to extasy, his mother will be proclaimed innocent, and he, my Margaret, his father's heir." No signature was added to these letters; but it was now my turn to be *cautious*. I gave Mr. Flam- all, not the most exact translation of their contents; and he observed, that they

would do you more harm than good ; for it was clear you were a bastard ; and had lost your best friend, who had happily left you enough for bread, assisted by your industry. I was soon the friend of Keith ; from him I only got hints, that quickened my curiosity. His wife was more pliant. She informed me, that Mrs. Duncan had written a long letter to Joseph Jago four days before she died ; and had, in her hearing, desired that Mr. Flamall should send it to his house. Her husband was entrusted with it, and the gentleman was told, that his partner had received it, and had promised to forward it without delay. Now, added she, I know this was a lie, for it was in Mr. Flamall's pocket at the time, and this is nothing to what I could say if I chose. " I was, as yet," continued Simons, " only on the threshold ;" and I forbore to press my questions. Flamall was *close* ; and yet I found he was in cash. Keith had also money ; and it

was my business to diminish his stock. This was soon effected ; and one night he said, that he had been a cursed fool ; for he might have made a man of himself had he insisted on his due. I urged him, however, by reminding him, that he ought to have known Flamall and the jade his sister. Yes, replied he, but they are always too cunning for me ; though I know what was in the pocket case ; and so does my wife ; one, of ten, only of the notes, came to my share for all my trouble. I could not get more from him ; but I knew then my next step was to the Minorities. Your mother's Joseph Jago was a rich Jew merchant, and I found his house without difficulty. I was received into an office of business, where several clerks were at the desk, and one who appeared to take the lead, civilly asked me my business. My enquiries led to his answers. " Mr. Jago's absence was undetermined ; but any letters or commissions I might

have, would be punctually sent him to *Cadiz* with his own letters." "Could I be favoured with his address?" "Certainly, but he had reason to believe his friend was then at Madrid ; however, any letters directed for him to the house of Jachimo de Castros would reach him." He courteously desired one of the young men to write the address, and presenting it to me, I withdrew.

So far all went well for my purpose ; and I was doing you no mischief ; but I will at once tell you, that I had motives for my conduct, in which you had not the least concern. Flamall had not only kept this whole transaction from me ; but had refused to assist me in a difficulty of my own ; and it behoved me to have him in my power. Had he known your chances in life, he would not have sworn to be your ruin, when he discovered, that you made love to his sister, nor would he have effected it, but for his wife. Your

marriage was no secret to them ; and I saw there was a plot brewing to ruin your poor wife, as well as yourself ; for that “ she devil ” hated her, because she was virtuous. I was consulted by Flamall on this occasion, whose rage was checked by my arguments. Let it be noted by you here also, that he saw as well as I, that you were not a *fool*, nor would be his *tool*. At this juncture I was one day with him in his office, when casually opening a drawer in his private desk for a mislaid paper, I saw a Morocco picture case appear. I took my time, and on examining it, found it not only the representation of the most beautiful woman I ever beheld, but also enriched with costly diamonds. I was at no loss from what quarter it came ; nor who had a right to it. My plan was now completed ; for I had the means in my hands of saving my own head from the pillory *at least*, and by serving you, should gain friends who would better recompense

my services than Flamall had done. It is d—d hard when rogues are not honest to one another,” added he, “for they have no one in that case on whom to depend : but let that pass. You had swallowed the bait I had sent you, the anonymous letter answered, and you requested permission to go to Harwich. All that followed you know ; but it is for me to inform you, that the honourable gentleman who saluted you on the road to Rumford, was Mr. Peachley, the uncle of Mr. Flamall’s wife, who was at that time in his house, which you passed, and moreover, I was in this secret, and what is more, received my fee in gold : Little did they suspect, that, villain as I was, I could not, nor would not, have been in this infernal business, had I not been certain of saving you as well as myself. But you were no sooner departed, and the coast clear, than I took the picture, and disposing of the frame for our joint convenience, I secured the angel face, which I will now give you.”

You may judge, my Harriet, of the sensations which assailed me, when he produced from its concealment, this evidence of my birth, and irreparable ruin. It was indeed the countenance of an angel which met my eyes ! She was in a Spanish habit, the painting exquisitely finished and enamelled. My expressions of grief and despair touched Simons. “ I am cursed,” said he, grasping my hand, “ you recant, you cannot forgive me ! but believe me, or not, I wished to serve you. I was fully convinced that I should succeed in tracing these men, whom I have mentioned ; and by this means your father and mother. They are noble and rich, the picture frame was finished by a ducal coronet ; it grieved me to break it ; but it was unavoidable. I could have proved your identity, and given such evidences of Mrs. Duncan’s death, and the circumstances which had thrown you into the hands of villains as would have been unanswerable.

But I am taken in my own toils," added he, with vehement and dreadful imprecations; "and not allowed to be honest when I wished to be so." I again soothed him, and by dwelling on my hopes of procuring my liberty, I solemnly engaged to take care of him to the utmost of my power. "I believe you on your word," replied he with more composure. "You have convinced me that virtue is not a convention of interest, nor religion a lie. There was a time, when my conduct disgraced neither; but I was young, and had passions to gratify which your creed did not suit. I was gulled by a hypocrite, robbed by rascals, and defrauded of six or eight years labour by the neglect and ingratitude of the man whom I served by my *talents*, as much as by my *hand*. Your compassion may save me, from worse bonds than even these," added he wringing my hand. "I am old, but I have yet

a heart ; and humanity may make me faithful."

Misery, my Harriet, does not harden the heart. It produced in mine an interest for this unhappy creature's *recovery* and comfort ; and insensibly he became my consolation, for, with a fertility of invention, he suggested so many ways of reaching Gibraltar, and from thence the object of my wishes, that hope was renewed. His communications from time to time gratified my curiosity ; although the subject of it was diverted to a less interesting concern than you, my beloved wife. Simons spoke of you, in terms of kindness and pity. " Then again," said he, " I was a rascal ; for I knew that her worthy father died in good circumstances, though without having secured to her a provision ; yet I held my tongue ; and was continued in my office with an advanced stipend. Flamall was certain, as he told me, that her beauty would be her fortune, and his

advantage ; and with this scheme in his head, she was treated with kindness under his roof, to the great disappointment of his wife, who had hoped to see herself acknowledged as Mrs. Flamall." " And wherefore does he keep his marriage a secret, even from his sister ?" asked I. " He has solid reasons," replied he, " for keeping the lady in the back ground ; her alliance is not the most honourable. Some business in which she and her uncle were useful to Mr. Flamall, obliged him to purchase her uncle's evidence, and to silence hers as being his wife ; but in return Flamall can any day he pleases hang old Peachley." I was now, my Harriet, circumstantially informed of a transaction which I shall spare my pen the task of going over with you. But it opened such a scene of wickedness as to leave no doubts on my mind, that your brother was fully qualified to impose upon your innocence ; and my soul sickened in reflecting that

you were in the power of a man, who, to use Simons's words, "wrote more hands than any man in the profession ; and with an exactness so unrivalled, that he could impose on the Devil himself."

On the evening of our fourth day's tedious journey we reached the abode of our new master. He was a man of about forty, could speak a few words of English, and as many of Spanish. He examined me with attention. My youth and appearance pleased him, but unfortunately the people who had conducted us from the ship, had received an impression which they gave to him, and poor Simons was judged to be my domestic. You know that his person is not conciliating, and it was in vain that I discovered the interest I took in his fate. We were separated ; my master taking me with him the next morning to a house and garden, several leagues from the town, in which he was ruler. Here my philosophy was checked. I was seized by an ardent

fever, and for many days they thought me dying. Nature resisted the attack, I was treated humanely, and till I had strength to crawl into the garden, and to seek the shade, they assiduously carried me to the fountain, which they perceived I liked. But my grief was beyond their kind offices; I had lost my mother's picture, and I understood that my patron had it. He at length condescended to visit me; for I believe he thought me a man above the common sort. My tears and intreaties produced nothing. He replied, that the lady pleased him, "it was pretty," and by Mohammed he would keep the painting. To soften this obduracy he sent me my books and linen; and I was given to understand that I was to teach him English when I was well.

I next implored him to send my friend to me. He evaded my request; and I conceived from the signs made me, that he was removed too far from me to render it

easy to accomplish. The gentleness of my bondage in the mean time kept hope alive ; for although I had the habit, and the badge of slavery, I had no cause for complaint. As my strength recruited, I was employed in light labour in the garden, and my mind was engaged by assiduously learning the Moorish language. Again, and again, I pleaded for the society of my friend, but in vain. At length I was told that he was dead ; and the first use I made of my more familiar knowledge of the language, gave me the detailed circumstances of his miserable end. His grief and impatience on being separated from me was shown in a manner which the people about him neither understood, nor pitied. He refused food, and they chastised his obstinacy. He became more determined, and he was left to himself and time for the remedy. Nature at length conquered ; he asked for food by signs expressive of his wants and submission ; and they in-

cautiously placed before him some boiled rice and water, of which he ate and drank so voraciously, that he died in great agonies, a few hours after.

I found in this relation, my Harriet, my last human tie dissolved; and I deplored the loss of a man, whom in happier circumstances of fortune, I should, it is probable, have scorned for his vices, and condemned as a being, lost to every virtuous feeling; but isolated as I stood, Simons was a prop, and I could not think of him as a man who had outlived humanity. But to return to my more immediate purpose. My patron, pleased with my rapid progress in his language, now became a pupil for mine. and with much curiosity he would listen to my reading and imperfect translations of the English authors; but he soon relaxed from his ardour, the labour discouraged him, and he contented himself with occasionally conversing with me in his native tongue. My story pro-

duced no compassion, he had long desired to have an Englishman in his house, and as such I should by any application at Algiers have brought him into trouble with the Dey ; he therefore chose to believe that I was of Spanish origin. My mother's picture was an evidence of this, for he had seen Spanish ladies, although none so beautiful. Judge of the torments I endured, when in saying this he would produce the picture, and comment on its superlative beauties. Thus passed the first three years of my captivity, and my incessant and defeated projects of escaping to Algiers. At this period my patron removed to a more distant province ; and I was further removed from every hope. Two years more were passed in that languor of mind, which the annihilation of hope occasioned. My master discovered, that he had gained no advantage from having an English slave. I was too feeble for labour, and too pensive for his amuse-

ment ; and without a scruple of conscience, or a mark of regret, he exchanged me for a fine Arabian horse which pleased him ; and with the most unpitying indifference refused to restore to me my mothers's picture, saying, that I had been a costly bargain.

With my new master, my toils were incessant ; but to what purpose should I detail these years of misery to my Harriet ? Wherefore should I attempt to delineate chaos, in which nothing of my former train of thought appeared, but the remembrance of the wife whom I had left in the power of a demon ? It would be a fruitless attempt to give language to feelings, which at times overpowered my reason. But man, my Harriet, is no less incomprehensible, than the power which has endued him with the force to resist suffering. In the days of ease and enjoyment, the principles of his soul lie dormant ; he shrinks from the slightest blast, which an-

noys his enervated body and mind ; given up to adversity, to hardship, and labour, all his powers exert their energy to preserve an existence, of which he is weary. Like the animals, it was my office to watch and serve ; I slept after my allotted toil ; and in the morning awoke to the privileges of the man, and the prospects of *the Christian*. How often did I bless my Maker, for the hopes of the Gospel. How often recall to my mind the lessons of my tender and pious Mrs. Duncan ! My mind was soothed by the hope that you were *dead*, my Harriet ; and I exulted in the thought of meeting with you in a world of bliss. My master, at this period, sold me to another ; he was on the eve of a long and fatiguing journey, and he had the wisdom to perceive, that my strength was unequal to the duties it would unavoidably impose. I was, in consequence, sold to another Arabian merchant ; but one much more wealthy than the master

I had so laboriously served, during his wandering desultory journeys, in his traffic of buying female slaves. To my unspeakable relief, I found that I was, with others in my master's suite, furnished with a horse for our journey, of which each rider had the care, and my good fortune for once appeared. One of the most valuable of these beautiful animals was suddenly seized with an indisposition, which must, in a few hours, have proved fatal from the means used to preserve his life. My master despaired of his recovery; and I ventured to propose copious bleeding. My advice was taken, and I was the operator; the horse recovered, and my favour was established. Our journey terminated at my master's home, and we became stationary. His only son, a youth of about sixteen, became attached to me, and, for a time, I entertained the romantic hope, of cultivating a mind, not deficient in natural endowments; but the moment

my pupil found that amusement led to application, he lost his relish for Ibrahim's instructions. His father, a quiet indolent man, had, in the first instance of the son's preference of me, formally given me to him, not displeased by the modes of instruction I had adopted ; nor was he without hope, that my example and precepts might restrain the impetuosity of his son's temper. I still hope, that I contributed to the amelioration of the soil, though I was unable to sow the seed I wished to see spring up. He exchanged me with perfect indifference for a young female slave ; but with generosity he recommended me to my new patron as something more than a common man, adding, that I knew all things. Whether this character, or my reserved, although resigned behaviour, produced the effect, is not a question of any importance here ; but it is certain, that he treated me with kindness, and conceived that I should repay him by the price he

had affixed to my talents. He was by birth an American, his traffic had conducted him into many remote regions; and I found in his conversation both improvement and amazement. Time had blunted the keen anguish of my wounded bosom; bondage was familiar to my dejected spirits; I was a non-entity to all, but my Maker; and in contemplating his arms of mercy, I could smile at my chains. In the course of two years I had, with my patron, journied by sea and land, until we at length reached Grand Cairo; where, induced by the profit accruing from my sale, he part'd with me to a Turk of some estimation in the eyes of his countrymen, for he was opulent and well protected. He was advanced in years, had a noble countenance, and spoke to me with a dignified and placid courteousness, bidding me look upon him with confidence. I obeyed, and our eyes met. Good God! when I perceived the tremulous signs of humanity,

the sympathetic greeting of his still expressive lineaments, my soul melted within me ; I was unable to resist the sweet invitation of pity, and I burst into tears, instead of paying him the exacted homage of a slave to his master. He turned aside, and I saw, yes, my Harriet ! I saw the tear roll down his venerable face. Here, for a time, was my harbour of repose. My benefactor and my friend listened to my tale of woe, and whether it arose from the suggestion of an enlightened reason, or from the benevolence of his heart, he neither blamed me for adhering to my religion, nor recommended to me his own. Once, and once only, he said with a smile, “ be discreet Ibrahim, and be true to Allah in thy services ; and whether thou art a follower of Jesus or of Mohammed, he will acknowledge thee.” I bowed in silence, and I gave no offence by being steadfast in my faith in the Gospel.

CHAP. VI.

Charles Duncan's Narrative concluded.

I Again return to my story. The recital of my life produced an effect which the good Abdallah had not foreseen. He frequently indulged me in the recapitulation of those circumstances of my disastrous fortune, which no interval of time had been able to erase from my mind. He permitted me, my Harriet, to speak of my wife, of my hopes as a parent; and my wounds bled afresh. To pity and soothing, he added more solid proofs of his regard. "I am old," observed he, "and cannot live long; you are a comfort to me; and the fate of those you deplore is

probably long since decided. I will give you freedom, and the means of returning to your country, on condition you remain here, and close my eyes." I, with gratitude, accepted of those terms; and, some months before he died, he had, in presence of the official magistrate, formally registered my freedom. He had, moreover, the precaution to give me a purse of gold, which he ordered me to secrete, saying, that his death might leave me penniless, as he could not trust to the generosity of those who might succeed him. I was faithful to my benefactor; and in heaven we shall again be friends!

I met with no impediment after his decease in the steps I took for my farther enlargement, and at length with my little treasure I reached Alexandria, where I found a French vessel ready to sail for Marseilles, in which I embarked as a passenger. My early acquaintance with the mathematics, and my desultory voyages

with my patron, had rendered me no inexperienced seaman. Our navigation was tedious, and the captain an ignorant babbler. For amusement, I had recourse to my activity; and, in the exercise on deck, I saw that the vessel was badly manœuvred, and in a crazy condition; keeping us constantly at the pump, and under apprehensions for our safety. Inured to labour, and cheerfully giving my time to the common relief of all, I became a favourite with the sailors, which providentially saved their lives and my own. Within a few leagues of our port we met with rough weather; and a swelling sea succeeded the gale, which was only formidable to a ship in the condition of ours. The leak gained upon us rapidly, and the captain, in despair, gave orders for the longboat to be prepared, and for each man to think of his preservation. The night was dark, and the peril obvious, in an attempt to reach land in the boat. My arguments

prevailed ; by incessant toil we kept the vessel floating till day break, when we took to the boat, and saw her sink before we had gone half a furlong. We reached, however, the port, and the *shipwrecked Duncan*, once more saw himself poor and friendless ; but I was *free*. I looked at my muscular arms and I smiled ; for I was *independent* ; and quitting my companions, who were relieved from their necessities by the charity they solicited, I repaired to a house, in order to replenish my strength with bread of my *own*. My slender purse sufficed, however, for my wants. I had enough to buy me the dress of a seaman, and fortunately finding an American ship bound for London, I offered myself as a shipwrecked Englishman, willing to work my passage *home*. Something in my voice and manner betrayed my feelings, when I pronounced the word *home*. The captain had the heart of a man, and I was told, to take my *birth* “ on board ” that very even-

ing, and that it should be a warm one ; for he pitied me. During the voyage my quiet melancholy and some accidental discourses of “ *my learning,*” to use the worthy captain’s word, so augmented the interest his benevolence had excited in my behalf, that, on reaching our port, he asked me what were my intentions respecting my future employment. I replied that my first care would be to seek out a *friend*, who, if found, would determine my fate, and probably place me beyond the reach of penury. “ But you may not find him,” replied he, viewing with attention emotions which I was unable to check. “ Let me advise you to keep where you are, till you can do better. I like you, and will retain you as ship steward ; you are a good seaman and an honest capable man ; and may be the maker of your own fortune.” I rejected this offer, saying, that I knew not whether my private concerns would permit me to leave England so soon as he would.

“ Well,” replied he, “ I will not press you into my service ; but I must pay for what you have done. I was on the look-out for a hand to supply one who had left me when we met. You have more than done that fellow’s duty, and you are justly entitled to your wages.” He placed ten guineas in my hand, and added, that whilst the ship was at her moorings, he thought I might as well make her my “ head quarters,” as she would give me a bed and board until a better hammock was found ; and in order to make this offer sit easy on your mind,” continued he, taking my trembling hand, “ You may keep a clear reckoning, by being useful to me with your pen, and your sobriety.” He instantly left me, and at his return I thanked him, and entered on my office of clerkship.

My approach to England had opened those wounds which time and religion had in part closed ; but I mean not to place

before you the condition of a mind torn by the anguish of reflecting on you, and corroded by the feelings of resentment, and the purposes of vengeance, which alternately governed my soul. At the sight of London my spirits forsook me; my heart ceased to beat, and I was conveyed to my bed in a state of insensibility. Would to God ! I had found in this respite from misery, my final dismissal from sense and sorrow ! But returning recollection only restored me to the contemplation of my wretched state. Forlorn and friendless ; cut off from the sweet ties of affinity ; blasted in fame ; stamped with ignominy, and marked for justice ! Deprived of the only comfort, the only hope of my life ! my wife, my Harriet ! who had been either destroyed in the wreck of my fortune, or lived to despise and to curse me as her undoer—Oh ! let me pause !

I now *wore* life away : one purpose ab-

sorbed my every sense of fatigue, every fear for my safety ! No traces of the Keiths remained untrod ; these ended in disappointments. Another family had established themselves in the square ; and even that had changed, in many respects, its former aspect ; for I scarcely saw on the doors a name that I could recall to my memory. Yet to this spot was I irresistibly drawn, and for hours together have I paced it. One day, and towards its close, I perceived that I excited the curiosity of the people who passed me ; and that one person in particular was observing me from the window of that abode, in which I had tasted of the cup of bliss, in order, as it should seem, to know more acutely that of wretchedness. I instinctively turned down a passage leading into Ormond Street. In passing a small shop, the window of which displayed, with the food of the poor, the humble luxuries of penny pies and tarts, I stopped with others, in

order to appease the wrath of the woman, whose property had been invaded by a child of about ten years old, whom she had detected in stealing a tart. Her fury was subdued by some one who paid for the delinquent's trespass ; and the collected persons continued their way with the weeping and terrified girl. From the train of thought which this little incident had produced in my mind, I was recalled to the consideration of the Harridan's face, who wondering probably *at mine*, and my remaining before her door, asked me what I wished for. I instantly recognized the girl, when in former times I had daily passed at her station near the passage I was then in, where sitting by a wheelbarrow, she sold her similar commodities, and exhibited a face, which time could not change ; for a claret coloured mark so completely covered one side of it, as to form a half mask ; and with this defect she was moreover exceedingly deformed ;

Struck by the conviction of her being a person who must have some knowledge of Mr. Flamall's family, I entered the shop, and placing myself on an old chest which half filled it, I asked for some cold meat, she applied herself to cutting and weighing it. "Do not spare it," said I, throwing down half a crown, "I am hungry and faint, having walked from Wapping; and my return thither to night must be provided for. Could you procure me a pint of porter?" "In a moment," answered she with alacrity, calling to a boy opposite, who as instantly supplied the demand. My questions followed; and as the prelude to them, I told her I thought I had seen her many years back, when I was often a visitor in a family, who then resided in Red Lion Square; but that I fancied they were removed, not seeing the name of *Flamall* in the Square. "Very likely," answered she, "mine is a face not easily forgotten; but I thank God, thirty-

five years standing at my barrow, have proved it an honest one; and you see me now with a house over my head, which will, I hope, better shelter me, than many in the Square have done those who passed me in all their glory and pride."

"Was Mr. Flamall one of those who lived too fast for his holding the station he was in when I knew him?" asked I, "Oh dear no," replied she, "there was no fear of that, he knew too well how to get money to be in danger of being poor. He sold his house when he married his sister to a rich old man, and took rooms in Lincoln's Inn, he was too high to be called an attorney, and it has been forsooth *counsellor* Flamall from that time." I must find him," observed I, "for I have some business with him *as an attorney*. A relation of mine left him to manage her affairs when she died, and I shall expect my little legacy" "I wish you may find it," answered she, "but they say he is a

sharp one, and loves money." It was a shame to marry, as he did, that beautiful young creature his sister, to an old hunk of seventy. "But I suppose the young lady was consulted," observed I. "I suppose so too," answered she, "for, God be praised, they cannot in this country force a poor girl to the altar ; but, as I have been told, Miss Flamall was broken-hearted for the loss of a sweetheart, and for a long time thought to be dying, and she did not care what became of her honour ; she has been lucky on the whole, for the old man soon left her a widow, and she married a very proper looking gentleman ; and is now called my lady. But it is years since I have seen her ; and she may, or may not be living ; for she went into the North with her first husband, and I have never seen her since ; nor should I have known thus much, but from an acquaintance, who lived sometime with her as cook, when she kept her brother's house."

“What was the girl’s name?” asked I. “I remember one who lived in the family at the time my aunt died, when I was frequently at the house on the business in question.” “Mary Nutt,” replied she, without embarrassment; “but she married, and died in child-bed, poor soul!” My enquiries terminated here, my agonies were not to be concealed, and hastily rising, observing that I should be late, I withdrew; the woman loudly calling to me to take my change. It was already dark; and the intelligence I had received had harrowed up every image of despair in my benighted soul. Shall I retrace the horrors of that night, when wandering from street to street, my footsteps conducted me to the river side? I stopped: I summed up the blessings I had lost. I became desperate, Harriet! The moment of perdition was suspended by a watchman’s passing me, who roughly asked me what I was about. I replied, that I wanted a boat.

“ You will do well to wait till day break,” answered he, surveying me with attention. “ Come, my poor fellow, let me show you a house where you will be safe.” Subdued by the gracious interposition which had saved me, I burst into tears, and thanking the man, I said, I would walk to my ship, naming it and Captain Nelson. “ You are a cup too low,” observed he, “ come, I will share a pot with you ; you are an honest man by your looks ; but you must not remain here.” I complied, and he led the way to a public house which was open. I shared with him the porter he called for ; and he returned to his duty, exacting from me a promise, that I would wait for day light. It came, Harriet, and I determined to live, and to take ample vengeance on my destroyer’s head. The state of my mind was such, as to admit of no impediments in my projects of revenge. I informed Captain Nelson that I was going into the country, in the hope

of meeting with a person whom it was necessary for me to see. Again he pressed me to continue with him ; but finding me determined, he contented himself with again supplying my purse with five guineas, and recommending me in the strongest terms, to the owner of the wharf he used, and who happened to be present. This man engaged to employ me, in case my necessities should oblige me to labour for my bread ; and giving me his address, he bade me come to him should my journey not turn out to my expectation. I had no chains to impede my feet ; but measuring the distance by land, and my strength, I preferred working down my passage to Newcastle ; having learned from the porter at Lincoln's Inn, that Mr. Flamall was at his brother's, Sir Murdoch Maclairn's seat near Durham.

Aware of the impression which sorrow has given to my toil-worn countenance, I have personated here a shipwrecked, and

sick mariner; and pity gave me shelter. Here ends my eventful tale, and here terminates the decree of Heaven, which pronounced that Charles Duncan should have no friend, no comforter, but that Being in whose approbation he should find peace and repose. I have seen you, I have heard your voice! I listened to your accents of melting tenderness and sympathy when you talked of your husband. "He is a man," said you, "of whom it may with truth be said that he has been steeped in affliction, yet, my Malcolm, like his Divine Master, he bows resigned to his cross; he murmurs not—but in his sufferings teaches us patience." And to whom was this said? to your son, to Maclairn's child! No frenzy followed this scene of anguish, but tears, my Harriet, which, like the dew of heaven on the parched earth, allayed the fever of my disturbed brain, and solaced my burning bosom. I forgot myself, I saw only in my Harriet, Mac-

lairn's wife and his son's mother, dignified and matured, by that virtue which had attracted my adoration.

Persevere most excellent of thy sex ! fulfil the duties of thy station !- forget that I have invaded on your peace by this intrusion ; but my eternal safety depended on your believing me *innocent* and *faithful*. A little while, and I shall be in that grave, in which *for years* you have believed me to be. The storm of passion yields to better thoughts. I will never see Flamall if I can help it. Trust to my word, it has never deceived you ; and to the God of truth I make my appeal ; that in thought, word, and deed, Charles Duncan was worthy of your love, and will die in the blessed hope of meeting your pure spirit in a world of permanent joy and peace.

As soon as I am assured that this packet is in your possession, I shall quit your neighbourhood, and finally leave a country, in which, as for Noah's dove, there

is no resting place for my foot. But should thy gentle nature turn aside from the sorrows at hand, to follow the hapless wanderer anew in his painful course, remember, that,

“ Though in a bare and rugged way

“ Through devious lonely paths I stray,

“ Thy presence shall my pains beguile,

“ The barren wilderness shall smile.”

Think not that I misapply these lines ; for my God will not refuse the worship of a heart, because still alive to those affections he implanted there as his most precious gift. Farewell ! once more I conjure you by the tenderness and compassion which this will awaken in your bosom, to banish all regrets. Thou wast a widow, Harriet, from the hour that Duncan's honour received its deadly wound. Thy vows were absolved from the hour thou wast taught to believe me capable of deserting thee, even to secure my own life. I have no doubts to clear away. Thou wast in

the hands of a *monster*; and heaven has been merciful, in extricating thee from the snares of vice and infamy, which *that monster* had prepared for thee.

Farewell, CHARLES DUNCAN.

P. S. Judge of my resolution! I have heard that Flamall is daily expected at the hall. I have heard him execrated as the tyrant who rules there. I have heard my Harriet pitied! Yet will I forbear. Duncan shall not be his own avenger; for there is a God "to whom vengeance belongeth," and he will not be mocked. I fly from the temptation of infringing his sacred rights. Your peace is the shield which I oppose to my just, my everlasting enmity with *this demon*. Again I promise, that this hand shall not be raised against your brother; for were it, my injuries would give it strength, and justice would guide it. Once more farewell! Think not of the lost Charles. He is only an atom.

Lady Maclairn in continuation.

From the hour that Maclairn's wife has had this evidence of the triumph of villainy over a man, graced and endowed with every requisite to awe it, and to subject its designs by the power of the virtue inherent in his soul, she has been a stranger to peace.

My conscience, lulled to repose by the fond hope of being necessary to your comforts, my dear Maclairn, as being the sharer of your sorrows, and the companion and friend in whose presence you sometimes solaced your woes, and as one whom you ever saw without trouble or disquietude, had ceased to upbraid me for crimes, to which I had been betrayed, by the authority of my brother and my own timidity. Had I, in the first hour, listened to my self-reproaches on discovering that I had been deceived, and that there still existed a witness against me able, in a mo-

ment, to render me the object of your scorn and detestation, I should not have shrunk from an open avowal of the infamy I had incurred ; for I felt that the woman who is dishonoured in her own eyes, and condemned by her own conscience, can meet with no encrease to her misery from the contempt of the world. But as I was Malcolm Maclairn's mother and the ostensible guardian of his father's honour and unsullied name, I have been dumb, and have sustained my burden with patience for their sakes.

But the time is not far remote, when Heaven, in compassion to my contrition and sorrows, will release me. You, my beloved Maclairn, will acknowledge that I have been faithful ; and Malcolm will honour his mother's grave with a tear, and he will say, " she has expiated her offence by her sufferings, and has proclaimed that she loved the truth, from which she was so fatally led away by a *Flamall*. Let me,

O heaven, depart in this hope! or be, as though I had never lived to those for whom I have lived. Oh spare to them the pang of pronouncing Harriet unworthy of the name of Maclairn!

I will not, my dear Lucy, hazard a single reflexion on this touching narrative, until the full tide of my compassion is somewhat subsided. At present I am disposed to consider that virtue too rigid, which could condemn a culprit like Lady Maclairn; and to say the truth, my heart is too well disposed to admire and to acquit her. You will not, therefore, expect any decision in opinion, until you hear from me again. I shall be anxious to hear that this packet reaches you in safety. Believe, that though Lady Maclairn's "dear friend," I am still your

RACHEL COWLEY.

P. S. Mrs. Allen sends her love. She is convinced that Miss Flint loses ground.

CHAP. VII.

LETTER LVI.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

I Am truly rejoiced, my Lucy, to know that the manuscript is safe in your hands, having had on my spirits a dread of its miscarrying. You know not the comfort you administered to poor Lady Maclairn by your letter of Saturday's post. She suspected, by my lenity, that I was but a poor casuist in matters of conscience; and that I was more solicitous to banish her sorrows, than to probe the cause from which they spring; but since you agree with me in asserting, that it is your decided

opinion, there can be no criminality in a concealment which secures to the innocent peace and security ; I find she listens to me with more confidence ; and I hope in time to convince her, that to disclose a secret which cannot produce, either directly or indirectly, any beneficial effect to those who must, on the contrary, suffer from such a disclosure, would partake more of folly than wisdom.

In this conclusion I am guided by the best light my understanding offers me : moreover, I cannot help placing in the balance, the whole train of events which have led astray from the paths of rectitude, a mind constituted like Lady Maclairn's ; and I am disposed to believe, that she will be exculpated by an unerring Judge, for those deviations to which she has been betrayed, by the treachery and oppression of others, more culpable than herself. Although falsehood is never to be excused, yet the caution of wisdom may surely sug-

gest, without a crime, the reasonableness and utility of suppressing that “*truth* which ought not to be spoken at all times;” the produce which regulates our zeal, and imposes silence, is no violation of truth. These are my arguments with poor Lady Maclairn ; I even go farther, Lucy ; for I insist, that she has *for years* been practising the most heroic virtues by suffering in silence, to preserve the peace and tranquillity of her husband and son.

But, my dear friend, if such be the penalty annexed to the concealment of error and duplicity by an ingenuous mind, even when that concealment is qualified by the powerful motives of preserving the peace and interest of all around us, what, I ask, must be the horrors of the mind, which covers, with a veil of darkness, the fraud intended to ruin the innocent, to betray the unsuspecting, and to defraud the ignorant ? What must be the state and condition of those whose life is a *lie* ?

I cannot form a more appalling idea of a state of future punishment, than in the contemplation of the hypocrite's terrors even in this life. What must be the life of a person, whom deceit and treachery have made responsible for his safety to a confederate, as depraved and dishonest as himself; living under the dread of the chance of every moment for open detection; harassed with the conviction that a more immediate interest, or more specious promises, will convert the sharer of his crimes into an informer and accuser, whom he dares not confront? What can equal the pang which must at times pierce his bosom when he recollects, that he enjoys the confidence and favour of his fellow creatures, only because they do not know him for a monster to be shunned! But I must check this train of thought.

Lady Maclairn thanks you for your soothing letter. Her mind is relieved by the participation of its burden. She can

now, to use her own words, live without devouring her griefs, lest they should be seen. Sir Murdoch smiles and tells her, she is his rival with Rachel Cowley. We shall yet be more comfortable I trust.

I enclose for your amusement and *Mary's perusal*, a letter we received on Monday from Mr. Serge. Well may this poor man apply to himself the words of the son of Sirach !

“ The father waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away sleep when she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her age ; and being married, lest she should be hated.” I only regret that Mr. Serge did not study the same author, or at least one as wise, for the means to prevent the watchfulness and parental anxiety, so admirably described in the above mentioned words : for had he understood better how to chuse a wife, he might have slept in peace. A woman without understanding

can hardly be called a virtuous woman, and we well know the price of a virtuous woman is far above rubies.

Miss Flint goes on deplorably ; her sufferings have subdued the baronet, who sees with augmenting admiration the unremitting attentions of his " excellent Harriet." Even Malcolm relents, and this morning most cordially wished his mother to urge her to send for advice to London, thinking her case a surgical one.

I am growing somewhat displeased with the winds and waves ; but I remember *Canute*, and submit to a power which I cannot control. Mrs. Allen sends her love ; she is constantly engaged with her invalid. Miss Flint is not easy without her.

I remain, faithfully your's,

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER LVII.

*Jeremiah Serge to Sir Murdoch
Maclairn.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Putney, Oct. 27.

I am certain, if you knew the consolation I have in your counsels and advice, you would rejoice ; for it is the command of a master we both wish to serve and obey, that the “ strong help the weak.” God knows I am weak, and my talents few ; you are a chosen servant, to whom many are intrusted ; but yet, Sir Murdoch, we are of the “ same household,” and the children of the same father ; and, blessed be God ! you do not, like some men, scorn the relationship, because one is appointed to a lower station than another, by that wisdom which will accept the *lowest*, who performs what is required of him. I am

again brought to the trial of my strength by a new sorrow, from which, my good friend, neither my money, nor my wisdom, can altogether shelter me. Yet both shall be tried, as the means of relief; for both have their use, when in the discharge of that duty, which I am bound to perform as a Christian parent. My daughter, Caroline, encourages me to open my heart to you; she says, she will be answerable for the event, for that Sir Murdoch MacLairn is a *man* as well as a *baronet*, and that he will feel as a father the troubles of a father; and she is sure, that you will approve of my conduct; I think also that you will; for I have been governed by her; and surely Heaven, in its mercy, has preserved her life for my good; and has arrested the hand of death, until she was more than ripe for the blessed state prepared for her. Such a child! and yet so wise! so good! I cannot proceed — —

I have taken up my pen again. It is

only five o'clock, and not a soul stirring in the house but myself. So I will try and disburthen my mind a little!—I do not now remember whether I told you, that some few weeks since, Mrs. Tomkins, after passing a day or two with my dear child, during her mother's absence from home, took Lydia to town with her, her dear sister thinking, as she told me, that the poor girl was losing her spirits. I, knowing that she thought of every one's comforts, consented to my good friend's wish of showing Lydia some kindness. The very evening they left us, Caroline turned her discourse on Nora, praising the letters she had written to us, and, with her perfect charity, hoping all things. "I do not repent, my good child," said I, "of the kindness I have shown her: I am not the poorer nor the worse man, if I have purchased with seven thousand pounds, the gratitude of one, on whom she depends for the comfort of her life.

Would to God, that I could purchase health for you !" She smiled, and said, " Then indeed would you be in danger of a bankruptcy ; for I believe my father would give his last shilling for his children's benefit. But let this pass. My health is not *at present* what troubles me. Promise me, my dear father, that, should Lydia stand in need of your support, you will remember, " That, where much is given, much may *justly* be required ; " but that where *nothing* has been *sown*, we cannot reasonably expect an harvest to rise." " Make your mind easy in regard to her," replied I, " thinking she had in her thoughts the little favour Lydia stands in with her mother, I pity and love her." " I understand what you mean ; and I promise you, I will be her father and her mother too, when occasion serves. She shall not be brow-beaten and neglected as she has been of late." " Alas ! my dear father," answered Caroline, " you must promise

more, or I cannot die in peace. You must promise to forgive another offending child: you must promise"—She threw her arms around me, Sir Murdoch, and weeping, added, "to shelter her from reproach and shame." I turned faint and giddy; and my daughter gave me her salts. Oh! if you could but have heard what she said, you would not wonder at what I have done. In a word, my child was satisfied; and she lives to tell me again, that she was going to a Heavenly Father, from *one* who imitated him in lenity to his offending offspring. There was, in her look, something which poured joy and comfort into my broken heart. I only wish I could go to heaven with her.

"Well, I saw my weak unhappy girl; and Mrs. Tomkins advised me to let her manage; for she was certain the terror of seeing her mother would be fatal to her and the unborn infant. I could not reproach her, Sir Murdoch, indeed, an *afflicted*

man is not an *angry* man : and after all, had not I been deficient in my duty ? Has not my indolent temper, and love of peace, been more considered than the good of my family ? I have been too passive, Sir Murdoch, too indulgent.

“ I found the young spark who had taken Lydia’s fancy was William, who was with us at Fairfield Hall, and whom we all liked, as a very sober well behaved young man. His sister, my wife’s favourite maid, introduced him to us some time before we went to Bath. She said he was like many foolish young men, tired of being remote from temptation ; and that he had gained, with much difficulty, her father’s consent to seek a place in London, as a valet, or a butler, being well qualified for both ; she was quite unhappy that he should be left to his own guidance till he was fixed in a sober family ; seeing he was a very likely young man, and quite a stranger. So my wife, who never is be-

hind hand in good nature, said he might come to Putney, and we were well pleased with him, and engaged him to attend us to Bath. Poor Lydia has been honest with Mrs. Tomkins. The young fellow was not so much in fault as herself: she confessed that she sought him. However, this was not the question with me; we might perhaps have hushed up this business; such things are done, as they say, every day: but what follows? a crime, in my opinion, ten times worse than Lydia's; being, as it were, committed in cool blood; for what can be more dishonest than passing off a deluded girl for a chaste one? and depriving a poor innocent babe of a father, and a name. I could not do such an act of injustice; being convinced that it would be doing what I should not think just in another to do by me.

I consulted our friend counsellor Steadman, however, on this vexatious business; for notwithstanding I have little to be

proud of as one may say, yet it went some how to my heart, that a child of mine should be pointed at by scorn and derision. He is a worthy and a wise man, and agrees with Mr. Tomkins, that the best thing I can do, is to let these young simpletons be married ; the girl being half distracted with the fear of losing sight of William ; and he being willing to take her, as he told the friend we employed, Mrs. Tomkins's mother, that he would work for her to his life's end, and show his good master that it was not his money he wished for. I find his parents are honest people, though low in the world ; they had a farm within six miles of York, but by losses amongst their cattle things went backward, and being in arrears for rent when their lease expired, they lost the farm. William was then about eighteen, had received good learning, and was a sober, steady lad ; but a little pride made him discontented ; and he did not like to work as a

gardener, in a piece of ground, which his father cultivated in that way, near York, and which, as he says, in excuse for his leaving his parents, could only produce a maintainance for them, and that he was only a burden on the ground. So all was fixed for the marriage, and we thought no time was to be lost.

I am not quite pleased with my wife, Sir Murdoch, although I know she is as harmless as an infant; yet it grieves me to see that she will always be *an infant*. She was absent a whole month from Putney; and whilst Caroline was thus employed, and thus disturbed, she was taking her pleasure with people she knew nothing of, and whom all honest and sober minded persons would shun. During eight days she waited forsooth, for the captain, who could not think it proper *for Mrs. Serge* to travel without an escort, as he calls a puppy. I remembered the time, when much younger, she could travel by

land and by water without such a conundrum in her head. However they arrived here, and the captain, to my great satisfaction, refused to lodge with us, pleading business in town ; and intending to be absent only three days from his Nora and his friends.

I shall say nothing of my poor wife's hysterics, when I told her how matters stood with Lydia. She was terribly bad indeed ! But, thank God, these fits are not dangerous, as the doctors say ; and experience seems to justify them in their opinion ; for, I know one of my wife's old friends, who has been subject to them twenty years. No sooner had my poor Lydia got the better of hers on this trying occasion, than she lamented her hard case, saying, with many tears and much anger, that she should never be able to shew her face again amongst fashionable people ; and that no one but myself would ever have thought of sinking their family by

such a *dunghill* connexion. I lost my temper, Sir Murdoch, for it frets a man to be always doing for the best, and who is said never to do right. And I very roundly told her, that all the plagues of my life were owing to fashionable people, as she called gamblers and pickpockets; and if, added I, that were all the mischief, I should be tempted to thank William Willet for his good services. You have now, continued I, been a month under a roof which the honest would shun; whilst under *your own*, Mrs. Serge, the prop and stay of my life, is sinking to the grave. You might have learned a lesson of more value than what your fashionable people at Reveland Park have been teaching you. She looked confounded, and wept in silence. No man loves peace more than I do; my heart relented; and I only added, that she knew this was my temper; that, whatever I *thought*, or rather *felt* to be right, that I would *do*; and that the following

morning Lydia would be Mrs. Willet. I kept my word, Sir Murdoch, and last Thursday by means of a licence, I saw the young couple united. I do not know how it was, but they quite softened me by their tears and thanks. Mrs. Tomkins was so good as to accompany them to her mother's; they set out as soon as the ceremony was over, and I returned to Putney to dinner, contented and relieved in my mind. On entering the parlour I found my *fashionable* son-in-law there; he was reading the newspaper, and I asked him, by way of saying something, "what news?" "None," replied he, "of importance; but I understand, Sir, we may expect a curious article to morrow." He smiled, and, as I thought, insolently; adding, "Miss Lydia Serge, second daughter to Jeremiah Serge, Esq. married to William Willet, late butler and gardener at Putney in her father's house, will make a curious paragraph!" "Very likely," an-

swered I gravely ; “ and the article may farther say, that the marriage ceremony was performed in *St. Martin’s Church*, by the minister of the parish, and in the presence of the bride’s father. I shall contentedly leave to the public their opinions ; some may be found who will perceive nothing wonderful in a marriage between *Serge the taylor’s daughter*, and *Willet the farmer’s son*.” “ You are to judge for yourself, Sir,” replied he, but I conceive few will think Miss Lydia’s character redeemed by this twofold disgrace to herself and family. Upon my honour I pity Mrs. Serge ; and I dread the effects of this intelligence on Mrs. Fairly.” “ Look ye, captain !” answered I, “ neither your mode, nor William Willet’s, of getting a footing in my family has been such as will make either of you my counsellors or guides. I shall act as I please, do as I please ; but as I am a *just man*, be it your case so to conduct yourself, as to make it

pleasant to me to be *your friend*. My children, *except one*, who is too good for this miserable world, have both chosen for themselves. The same lenity has been employed for the one, whom weakness has betrayed to folly, as to the other, whom vanity and presumption rendered ungrateful and disobedient." "I hope, Sir," returned he with a fierce air, "you do not pretend to compare—" "We will do what is better," answered I, ringing the bell, "we will drop the enquiry, and have our dinner." My gentleman was surprised, I believe; by my manner he took the hint, however, and followed me to the dining parlour. Our meal was not a chearful one, and I went to my dear girl the moment the cloth was withdrawn.

I see, Sir Murdoch, how things are turning. My wife is cajoled and flattered by this fellow to such a degree as would surprise you; she fancies he has done her a great favour by running away with her

daughter ! Poor soul ! it will be well if he does not run away with her simple understanding ! However, all these troubles call upon me for diligence in the settling my worldly concerns, as well as those, for another and a *better* state. I have already spoke to counsellor Steadman on this subject. My property is very considerable, and much caution is necessary in the disposal of it, so as to render it a *lasting* benefit to my family. Now, my good Sir Murdoch, I think nothing would give me more comfort in my last hour, I believe it is not far distant, than to know that I had left you, and my dear friend Mr. Malcolm with Mr. Steadman, guardians and trustees for the support of the ignorant and helpless, and a *wall of defence* for the innocents who may spring from my daughter's imprudent marriages. I am led to hope that you will not refuse me this kindness. You shall hear from the counsellor when all is prepared. He has been my right-hand

lately ; I am directed by him in all that relates to William's settlement ; but Lydia shall have the same allowance as Nora ; and we are on the look-out for something for her husband.

God preserve you all in health,
prays your faithful friend,

JEREMIAH SERGE.

P. S. My wife begs to be remembered, she is out of spirits, and fancies the air of Putney unwholesome. My Caroline is a miracle ! It is astonishing to think how nature is supported ! I am far from being well ; you will not wonder at this.

CHAP. VIII.

LETTER LVIII.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

IT is with no small satisfaction, my dearest Lucy, that I find my “enthusiasm of mind and ardency of temper,” (to avail myself of your gentle terms for a spirit too often governed by the impulse of a heart, which, in its promptitude is apt to take the lead of judgment) have met with your approbation and concurrence, in regard, at least, to the conduct I mean to pursue with Lady Maclairn : to say the truth, Lucy, I could practise no other ; for she hourly rises in my *estimation*, and *esteem*

with me is the basis of affection. The relief which she finds in communicating her thoughts to me, has given to her very language a frankness which appears to be her natural character; and in her account of the various occurrences of her life, since she married Sir Murdoch, she omits not even her conjectures, as these arose from the circumstances in which she has been placed. "I long since had proofs," said she this morning, when speaking of the suffering Miss Flint, "that Lucretia was not devoid of feeling. My brother, for reasons of his own, had so contrived it, that she firmly held an opinion which he, it is probable, only *affected* to have. Illegitimate birth he considered as an indelible disgrace on the innocent; and Miss Flint adopted this notion, firmly believing that neither fortune, talents, nor even virtue could screen an unfortunate being, who stood in this predicament, from the reproach and insults of the malicious.

Her affection for her child was unbounded ; and I saw with comfort, that I had at least gained her gratitude, by my apostasy from truth. The conduct she maintained with my brother, in the mean time, puzzled me. It was obvious, he was no longer *the favoured lover* ; and one day, observing Philip much disturbed from an interview he had with her in the garden at Kensington, I ventured to say to Lucretia, that I was sorry to see Philip unhappy. “ I understand you,” replied she, “ and I will be explicit with you. I shall never be his wife ; nor will I be to him what I unfortunately have been. I am a *mother*, Harriet, and I will prove myself one, by remaining what I am, and what I can contrive to be, the guardian of my son. I have no passions to gratify, no desires to control, since I beheld the face of my child ; to love and cherish him, and to bless you for your goodness, shall fill up the measure of my *miserable* days.”

She burst into tears and left me abruptly. Her sincerity wanted no evidence stronger than her conduct, continued Lady MacLairn. For some time all went well. I was made happy through her mediation, and amongst the delusive hopes, which led me to Farefield Hall as MacLairn's wife, was the flattering one, that, by the influence I had acquired over Lucretia, I might in time reconcile her to Mrs. Howard. Mr. Flamall frustrated these designs. His affections, as a parent, were so artfully, so effectually brought forward, and his conduct was so specious, that Lucretia insensibly gave him a confidence, which as gradually subjected her to his will and pleasure as myself; and she observed, that nature had yet preserved one strong hold in Flamall's bosom; for that he loved his child; and that would prove to her a source of future comfort; for that no man was more capable of the office of preceptor. Even I assented to this opinion, Miss

Cowley, as it related to his talents ; and I was still the dupe of that affection, which nature had interwoven with my frame for my *brother*. He became more serious and reserved from the hour of Philip's birth, and in the regularity of his conduct, and the instances I had of his growing parsimony, I scrupled not to think that he was a changed man in many respects, although still unsubdued in his love of power. As Philip became of an age to receive his lessons, his visits at the hall might be called a residence ; but you know already how little these visits were productive of comfort to me, and, I may likewise add, of comfort to Miss Flint ; for my brother was a rigid disciplinarian ; and had not the child's temper been one of the most docile and sweet, he would have been miserable ; for my brother, guided by his acquaintance with vice, understood not that the path to virtue is pleasant, and to unpervverted feet, and a pure heart, has al-

allurements far superior to any that his lectures and vigilance could furnish.

You may judge of the difficulties I had to encounter in this period of my life ; and the condition to which I was reduced by *a brother's* reminding me, from time to time, that it was best for me to be "*prudent.*" There was little need of a conscience like mine to draw the inference ; his tone and manner were sufficient, and he repeatedly roused Lucretia to stand forth as my champion, on a ground which had made me a coward, and the slave of the wretch who had led me into the crooked path. " Her conduct was, at least, uniformly generous on this point," continued Lady Maclairn ; " she never, directly nor indirectly, mentioned Duncan, nor did I, till very lately, know to what extent her knowledge went of this unhappy affair. I breathed like one freed from death, when I found that Mr. Flamall had determined to leave England with Philip. From the

time I had the unfortunate Mr. Duncan's narrative before me, my soul abhorred the sight of my brother ; and I so entirely secluded myself in my husband's apartment, that we did not meet twice in a week, and his reserve and coldness when we did, went not beyond mine. Again, my dear Miss Cowley, truth obliges me to give a good report of Miss Flint. In proportion as my spirits flagged she redoubled her attention to my wants, and her purse was ever open to me. I believe, that my brother's reason for going to Jamaica, originally sprung from a serious quarrel with Lucretia. The death of his wicked wife left him free to marry, and he was very pressing on that subject with Miss Flint. Lucretia had her secrets as well as myself ; but accident led me within reach of hearing her say, " Never ; urge me no further ; for by all that is sacred, if you do, Percival shall know all." I retreated, fearing to be discovered ; and, from that time, his voyage

was mentioned as a decided matter. After my brother's departure, Lucretia fatigued me with her importunities, to draw me from my husband's room. "I should have a servant to watch him ; and one I could rely on, although it cost her an hundred pounds *per annum*." I was firm, and she submitted. Left to herself, she thought of her niece, and I was consulted on the expediency of her inviting this poor girl to live with her ; I was distressed for a reply ; knowing the bitter resentment which she had nourished even to the name of Howard ; and her hatred to those who had sheltered this unfortunate and excellent couple. I evaded the question as well as I could, contenting myself with observing, that I had always thought it an act of duty on her part to take care of her niece. "I am willing to do so ;" answered she colouring ; "but I must first know what she is good for ; and whether the people with whom she lives have not taught her to

believe I am a monster." I saw the rising storm, and timidly shrunk from it, saying, that I could not give her my advice, without incurring the censure of being swayed by a sordid consideration for my reputed son. "But you know," added I, "that you can provide for both these young people; and you must determine their respective claims." Poor Mary soon after exchanged her abode of peace, for *this*, and the event has confirmed my fears. The gentle and timid Mary neither gained spirits here, nor strove to amuse her aunt's. She had but one path, it was to submit in silence to her aunt's temper, and to anticipate her commands by her diligence. She soon perceived the fatal habit which Lucretia indulged; and this produced terror and disgust in her innocent mind, which, as you will believe, did not tend to conciliate her to her aunt's hardships. I did all that I could do, to soften the one and encourage the other; but my interference was

resented, and I was reproached, as being allied to her enemies, and blinded by Malcolm to favour the Heartleys.

I was tempted, Lucy, to hazard some questions, with a direct reference to Sir Murdoch's suspicion of having been poisoned; but a moment's reflection checked my curiosity; and I diverted her attention from perceiving my embarrassment, by asking her, whether she knew what was become of the gentleman's portrait, and the papers, which so obviously appeared to have belonged to Mr. Duncan's story? She unaffectedly answered, that, Sir Murdoch had, when in London to meet me, consigned them into the hands of the Spanish minister, then resident there; and in the interview," added she, "he learned that this nobleman was not totally a stranger to the fate of Duncan's parents; they were dead; and a distant branch of the family was in possession of the title and immense estate; but there was a sister of the Duke

still living, who was abbess of a convent; and to her he engaged to deliver these melancholy memorials of her still adored brother. Can you wonder, Miss Cowley," continued she with emotion, "that I wish for death! think of my meditations, when darkness and repose conceal me from all eyes but those of a merciful Being, who witnesses my agonies. Such has been the ruin effected by a wretch I dare not curse! He is the child of my parents; the ties of blood still flow around my heart; and I implore Heaven's sparing mercy for him, whilst my soul sickens at the thought of the injuries his hands have wrought, and which no time nor repentance can remedy. Think of his dreadful account with outraged humanity, violated truth, and every law of justice! I endeavour to hope that Charles has found his peaceful grave. I dream of him; and this frame of mind lays me open to superstition: my imagination presents him, as exultingly hover-

ing over me on angel's wings, smiling with ineffable complacency, and beckoning me to follow him. I try to obey him, and awake trembling. Such are the visions of my sleeping hours! You need not be told the meditations of my waking ones. One single principle of action has counteracted the fatal effects of these perturbations. I love my husband, my dear Miss Cowley, with an affection exclusively his; and I wish to live, whilst that life is useful to him. I am prepared for the event of being hateful to his eyes. God will have compassion on me!"

My tears composed her; and my arguments were listened to. She promised me to be all I wished; and I broke up the conversation by proposing a walk in the avenue. Her husband joined us there, and I told him I had been chiding my mother. He smiled tenderly, and placed himself between us, observing, that he would keep the peace. "You will not succeed,"

replied I with assumed gaiety ; “ nor will I accept of you for an ally ; you are too much like your wife ; but I have blustered her already into obedience to my will ; and she had promised to be good, and to walk with me every day the sun shines, instead of sitting in Miss Flint’s room to hear of pains which she cannot alleviate. He thanked her, and blessed your

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER LIX.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

I am glad you agree with me in thinking it proper that our dear Mary should know the doctor’s opinion of her aunt’s precarious life. She has consented with

great reluctance to see Doctor Tufton ; he confirms our fears, and has made no change in her medicines. She told Douglass that she hoped he was satisfied by her compliance with his wishes, and added, " Do not think I am to be deceived ; I have done with medicines and doctors." " I told her that in that case I should think myself dismissed from her presence as well as favour," said the doctor. " She answered that the visits of a friend would still be useful and acceptable ;" but added she dejectedly, " your prescriptions may not be more infallible for a sick mind, than a diseased body." " I took her burning hand," continued the good doctor, " and with sincerity of heart I told her, that in both my characters, as her physcian, and as her friend, I still hoped to be salutary to her, on condition she did not desert herself. You are too low now, added I, pouring out an untasted cordial at my hand ; you ought to have taken this two

hours since. She put the cup aside, and, shaking her head, said, you know it will do me no good ; these are not the cordials I need. I know there are others within your reach, replied I with seriousness, that would contribute to give efficacy to this, and which you refuse from a despondency of mind which you ought to check. Wherefore is it, that with a brother nigh you, and whose conversation would cheer you, you refuse to see him ? His heart is melting with compassion at the intelligence of your dejection and sufferings. “ Why then does he not come and tell me so ? ” asked she with agitation. But I know what keeps him at a distance ! he cannot say, Lucretia, I forgive you ! he cannot say, be comforted ! ”

“ The offence which produced your intemperance, and his too warm resentment, has been fully expiated by the pain which both have experienced from it,” observed the doctor ; “ both were in fault, and

both have regretted the fault. Percival thinks only of a sick and afflicted *sister*. I will pledge my life on the sincerity of his affection for you ; and I know his soul seeks to meet you in peace and love." She was oppressed, and gasped for utterance. " Oh ! why does he delay ?" said she, " I long to see him before I die ! You shall see him to day," replied I, " on condition that you will be composed. I am confident that you will find comfort and amusement from his society. She named the hour, and requested that I would come with him, not knowing how the sight of him might affect her. I thought it better to avoid the suspense of procrastinating the interview," continued the doctor, " and Mr. Flint has been with her. Poor Percival was extremely shocked when he saw the alteration that sickness had made in her person. She gave him her hand, and told him, with more composure than I expected, that she took his visit kindly."

He spoke with emotion, and said something of his hopes, and the ensuing summer. I shall not live to see it, answered she, looking stedfastly on him ; but it will comfort you, Percival, to know that the prospect of the grave no longer terrifies me ; I am not without hope. He interrupted her. Cherish it, said he, eagerly, and, kissing her cheek, cherish it, my dear Lucretia ! and may its salutary influence restore your health as well as your peace ! Is this your wish ? replied she, bursting into tears. Do you, can you forgive me ? You had not seen me here, Lucretia, answered the captain with solemnity, had any resentment lurked in my bosom : as I hope for pardon for my own errors and mistakes, so certain is it, that affection and compassion brought me hither. Forget, as I have done, the past ; live to be my comfort ; and may this hour cancel from your mind every thought that retards your recovery ! He again kissed her, and

she hung on his neck, groaning with her agitations. Percival, overcome by this scene, permitted me to lead him from the chamber, and he was not able to see the family ; I parted with him in the avenue. My patient, fatigued by these exertions, is fallen into a dose. She is sinking gradually ; and will probably be lethargic."

Mary will be anxious to hear the result of this first interview ; her aunt requested that the captain would visit her daily.

I have only time to sign the name of your

RACHEL COWLEY.

P. S. Has Alice informed you that Mr. Snughead is dead ? either his son-in-law's return, or his grief for his wife was too much for him : he died at Bath of the gout in his stomach.

LETTER LX.

From the same to the same.

OUR good father has no doubt communicated to Mary the news of her uncle Oliver Flint's death. Peace to his manes ! He has left behind him a good report, and we are much pleased with the last proof of his being an honest and friendly man. His heir, Mr. Philip Flint, has written a very handsome letter to the captain, to inform him of his legacy of five thousand pounds, and Mary's of three, adding, that, believing it was the intention of the donor, that there should be no delay in the payment of these bequests, he had transmitted to him the first six months interest of the sum, in order to answer the present unavoidable retardment of the principal sum whilst waiting for his precise

orders. Mr. Flamall still remains obdurate ; a circumstance which Mr. Philip Flint in his letter to his mother regrets, as a draw-back on his comforts, and peculiarly oppressive to his mind at a time when he might have been useful as a consoler. -

There were letters for Miss Flint from Mr. Flamall and her brother ; some precautions were judged requisite in regard to the delivery of these. Doctor Douglass undertook the business, as well as to prepare her for the sable dress of the captain. He asked her how long her brother Oliver had left England ; she took this hint, and replied with calmness, that he had been dead to her more than thirty years ; but, added she sighing, when we are re-united, this period will appear nothing ! Encouraged by her composure he proceeded to mention his honourable acquittal of his promise to Mr. Philip Flint, and the regrets of his friends for his loss ; and giving her the letters destined for her was on the

point of retiring, after recommending to her to be careful of fatiguing her spirits. "Remain a moment," replied she, taking the two letters. "You shall see that I mean to preserve my tranquillity. This comes from a hand that never administered to me, aught but comfort."—She placed Mr. Flint's letter under her pillow. "*This* from a man who, miserable in himself, is the common disturber of the peace of others. I will not read his letter: put it into the fire." "I hesitated, in obeying her," continued the doctor; "she perceived it, and tore it into fragments." Now burn them, and judge, said she, that I can be firm. Mr. Flamall has nothing to do with this hour! I will not be disturbed by his resentments. She paused, and saw the mutilated letter consumed. "I shall not have the comfort my brother Oliver had," observed she, "but I do not murmur. Percival is very kind to me, tell him that I am calm and composed; but

that I shall be busy to day, and cannot see him ; and send Lady Maclairn hither."

It appears that her ladyship's commission was to send off an express to Durham for an attorney whom Miss Flint named. Mary will have a letter from the captain to morrow. I am going to pass the day at the Abbey ; Sir Murdoch droops a little, he dreads the consequence of his wife's perpetual fatigue ; she has a cough not very pleasant to my ears.

Mrs. Allen is of great use to the invalid. She regulates the sick room with her usual address, and has convinced Miss Flint of the utility of quitting her bed for the sofa during some part of the day. She thinks it refreshes her spirits ; and some interval of ease at present enables her to make the exertion.

I remain Lucy's affectionate,

RACHEL COWLEY.

CHAP. IX.

LETTER LXI.

From the same to the same.

THIS letter will contain little beyond the particulars of a scene which recently passed in Miss Flint's room. Our dear Mary's solicitude is unavoidable, and her wish to know what passes here ought to be indulged.

Mrs. Allen was requested to witness the signing of Miss Flint's will, she cheerfully complied; Douglass and Mrs. Warner joining with her.

When this business was terminated, she requested the doctor to inform the

captain that she wished to see him after dinner ; and, with a languid smile, she added, tell him that Mrs. Allen shall give him his coffee.

When alone with our friend she begged of her to be the witness to the conversation she meditated on for the evening. " Do not refuse me," continued she. " I have a few instructions to leave with my brother, and you will be useful ; you will hear nothing to grieve *you*, although it may affect him, and flatter me ; but I wish to finish my business with this world !"

The captain, in Mrs. Allen's words, was punctual to his time. His sister was on the sofa, but looked flushed and fatigued. " He was agitated," continued Mrs. Allen, " and I said, we are doing well to day, Sir." He took his seat by her, and pressed her offered hand with his lips. She immediately spoke of Mr. Oliver Flint's death, making some obvious reflexions on

the event. Then suddenly looking at her brother's dress, she said, I hope, Percival, you do not mourn that poor Oliver has given to a brother who stood by him as a son, an inheritance that ought in the eye of justice to have been yours. The captain coloured, and replied with eagerness, that he was perfectly contented with the proofs he had received of his brother's consideration. He has rendered me comfortable, added he, for the remainder of my life, and has placed Mary in a condition fully adequate to her ambition. I am grateful, and sincerely hope, that Philip Flint will live to show the world he was worthy of the man whom he has succeeded. Miss Flint was softened to tears. God grant, said she with emotion, that my will may be thus satisfactory to you ! I have done for the best, Percival, I have been governed by only one principle. Let me die in the hope that you will accept it as an evidence of my repentance for hav-

ing so long overlooked your *just claims*!—
She spoke this with agony.

My dear Lucretia, said the captain hastily, and startled at the disorder she was in, let us drop a subject so useless. I have no wants, no wishes ungratified, but that of seeing you well. I cannot bear your kindness, replied the poor weeping Miss Flint; I have not deserved it! Say not so to *me*, answered the brother with tenderness. We have all, my dear sister, to make this acknowledgment to our Maker. We have all of us errors to regret, and something for contrition, but we have a merciful Judge, who knows that we are weak and fallible: let me conjure you to endeavour to recover your spirits. Let us employ the allotted space allowed us in acts of love and mutual aid. Your friend, as well as physician, assures me, that your malady is augmented by the depression of your mind. Exert your faith; animate your spirits by reflecting, that

you are in the hands of a Being infinite in mercy. Would you like to have Mary with you? She wishes to see you, and might be useful to you. I could not bear to see her, answered Miss Flint with a voice broken by sorrow; but it is not from unkindness, that I reject her, it is not hatred nor cruelty that govern me. I am certain it is not, replied the captain; No: my dear sister! their empire is over; and a temper, to which worlds would be nothing in the balance, has now a place in your heart. Oh! live to enjoy the blessed exchange! live for my comfort!

“I thought his sister must have fainted,” continued Mrs. Allen, wiping the tears of sympathy from her honest face; and I hinted that she wanted her cordial. The captain understood me, and I believe would have gladly retired himself and left her to my care; for he rose and observed, he had staid too long, and that she needed rest. Rest, repeated she, detaining him,

oh, be not so deceived ; I need no rest, I can find none that cheers me like seeing you. He again took his seat, and with composure observed, that she had promised him coffee : and that he would remain, on condition she would try to be quiet and listen to our chat. She smiled, and I took my post.

Again he offered to leave her, when, with composure, she said, my dear Percival you must indulge me ; this is the last time I will mention business which may distress you ; but I shall not be easy until I have finally settled my concerns with this world. Whatever you find done in this way, when I am dead, remember what I have already said, I have done all in love, and have been as just as I could be to you. You will find my will in that cabinet, continued she, directing his attention to it. Lady Maclairn has my instructions in respect to all that it contains,

except the will ; she will inspect it in your presence.

Here is a present for my niece. May it prove to her, what of late it has been to me, a blessing ! The captain paced the room in silence. This picture, my dear and invaluable friend, continued she, addressing me, you will see buried with me. She gazed intently on the miniature of Mr. Philip Flint, which she wears in her bosom. Poor fellow ! added she mournfully, he will not soon forget Lucretia ! He will regret that he was not with me.—I cannot stand this ! said the agitated captain, and were I not convinced, Lucretia, that even in this depression of your mind, there is a healing power more potent than all human aids, you would break my heart.—I will spare your feelings, answered she, only let me say a few words more : I wish to have your concurrence. I have nominated Mr. Greenwood to succeed Snughead in the Farefield living ; but if

you think he would like the presentation better from you, speak, and it shall be so managed. "I do not believe," added Mrs. Allen, "that the captain could have uttered a word, had his friend's being made an archbishop depended on it; he was quite overcome by his feelings."

"At length he ventured to say, should you like to see Mr. Greenwood? He would be sorry to see me, replied she; he is a good man, and will pity me; but I wish not to see him. I have no want of his assistance; she raised her eyes to Heaven, and paused. "You may imagine," continued Mrs. Allen, "that her exertions had subdued her. The captain no sooner left her, than she went to her bed; and I have the comfort of quitting her in a peaceful sleep."

This recital, my Lucy, will affect poor Mary; but it will do her no harm hereafter. Her mind wants firmness for the trials of life; and she must acquire strength

by the usual means. I have occasion for more patience and fortitude than I possess. I tremble for the consequences which will result to Mrs. Allen, should Miss Flint continue long in her present condition. What will you say to the cares and attention that devote my dear friend to her room the whole day? What will you say to her swelled legs, got by watching her through half the night? Will it be any comfort to you, when she is on a sick bed, to be told that her piety and prayers are the cordials that quiet the perturbed *spirit* of the miserable invalid? I have yet much to do with my rebellious one; and I honestly confess, that, sincerely as I rejoice at Miss Flint's present temper of mind, I should murmur to give a saint to her funeral obsequies. My serious remonstrances have answered; Mrs. Allen is gone to bed, and I will take care she shall not quit it to-night, to traverse half clothed, the passages to that of another.

What with fogs within, and fogs without, it has been necessary for me to make a sun of my own. Sir Murdoch has undertaken to teach me to paint in oil colours; and I have begun to copy a landscape “très riant,” for I cannot help laughing at my imitation of a good copy.

In continuation.

I was summoned below stairs. The enclosed will explain the cause. Sir Murdoch and his son set out for Putney tomorrow morning; and we are in a bustle, and somewhat anxious about the *roads* and *cold weather*. I must help Lady Maclairn in this alarm.

Adieu, your's,

R. COWLEY.

LETTER LXII.

*From Mr. Serge to Sir Murdoch
Maclairn.*

Putney, Decr. 3.

MY dear and honoured friend ! It is all over with Jeremiah Serge ! The public papers will tell you that he is desolate. To-morrow I shall lose sight of her precious remains ! But what of that ! Do I not see her always before me ? Do I not hear her voice, and the blessed consolations she gave me. My name was in the last sigh that conveyed her to her God ! Oh ! she was a child, Sir Murdoch, worthy of a heavenly Father ! She was too good to be lent me long ! and yet I never forgot to be grateful for the loan : my daily prayers were thanks to God, for the bless-

ings she imparted ! so affectionate, so gentle, so wise, and yet so young ! What a bulwark of defence has my age and weakness lost ! I do not know why I write to you ; but I am so oppressed by my thoughts, and my kind friends here fatigue me. They cannot help it. They do for the best ; but what can be done for me ! Is it not hard to see the sapless trunk left to the wintry blasts ; and the blossoms of the spring cut off ? If my child had been spared only a *little while*, she might have closed my eyes, and I had been at rest. But I must not murmur against God ! My Caroline warned me not to grieve as “ one without hope.” And I will hope, Sir Murdoch, that my present feelings will soon effect my deliverance. I shall soon be re-united to my child. I am very ill, and I think it is better to tell you what also disturbs me in this hour of tribulation before I send away this letter. I have not been negligent in regard to my worldly

concerns, as these relate to the security of my wife and children ; for I lost no time, in executing that duty, after you had so graciously consented to be my children's friend. But my heart is now set upon seeing you and Malcolm once more before I die. You are a good man, Sir Murdoch, and, in the sight of God, that is the only title that will survive you. I think you will not refuse to come to me : no comfort on earth would be so welcome ; but do not delay your journey, if you mean to see me ; for indeed I am sinking fast. My poor wife is on a sick bed ; she might have foreseen the blow more than she did, but we have all our faults ! Poor soul ! She finds at this hour that life needs more, than a doublet of silk, to guard the pilgrim in his rough journey ! I am sure Malcolm will second me in my request. Tell him, that poor Caroline spoke of him not an hour before she died,

and called him her good brother Malcolm.

God preserve you, Sir Murdoch, from knowing the sorrow which fills the heart of

JEREMIAH SERGE.

LETTER LXIII.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

Friday morning.

MY letter * of Monday last contained the intelligence of the good baronet's safety, and the comfortable hopes that are entertained at Putney, that Mr. Serge will not need executors to his will, for some

* This letter does not appear.

time at least; for the sight of the travellers has been a cordial to him. This morning we had another letter; it was from Malcolm; all the business which occasioned the journey had been finished to poor Mr. Serge's contentment; but he had exerted himself too much; and the gout had overtaken him. Malcolm adds, that the doctor regards this indisposition as favourable to his friend's general health, and that he is chief nurse; Mrs. Fairly attends her mother with assiduity, though unwell herself; she is, he says, the shadow of the Leonora we know, and he thinks her in a consumption. Her husband, from time to time, attends her; but his reception is cold and ceremonious in Mr. Serge's room, and he is not less restrained on his part with the guests. Sir Murdoch is in perfect health, and the counsellor shares, in his leisure hours, and contributes to his amusement.

Lady Maclairn summons me to perform my part of the task we have before us ; she has finished her part of it, and I have to fill the second sheet of paper to Putney. You will soon find me with you again ; but my good father must have this hour, and the satisfaction of knowing that his wife is easy and reasonable, as is your

RACHEL COWLEY.

CHAP. X.

LETTER LXIV.

Sunday morning.

WILL my Lucy need from me the obvious reflexions, which will result from the perusal of this letter? "No:" nor have I time to make them, though the impressions on my mind are such as will indelibly remain, as admonitions to warn me against too much security in this world's air bubbles!

I had so well sustained my part with my pen, in writing to Sir Murdoch, that I had produced a cheerfulness on the pensive brow of his wife; and she detained me with her, until it was too late to fi-

nish my letter to you. I therefore continued to read and chat with my friend till near the dining hour. The appearance of Doctor Douglass was nothing new; but we were equally struck with his manner and countenance; and her ladyship, with alarm, asked him, whether Lucretia was worse. "No," replied he, with visible distress, "there is no material change; but she has asked for you." Lady Maclairn immediately quitted us to go to her sister's room. "She is dying," observed I, "you think so, I am certain; why do you flatter Lady Maclairn with hopes?" "Poor creature!" answered he, "I wish she had only this shock to support, there would then be little to justify my fears for her; but I am a coward, Miss Cowley, and you must assist me, and yet I tremble even in soliciting your aid; for these exertions can do you no good." "Never think of me," said I eagerly. "What are the dreadful tidings you

bring?" "That a sinner is departed," answered he with solemnity; "that Lady Maclairn has no longer a brother. Let me conduct you to your apartment," continued he, seeing me pale and trembling, "I must consult you; and we shall be interrupted here." I made no reply; but yielded to his assistance.

A burst of tears relieved me. "Wherefore is it," observed poor Douglass, with compassion, "that you seem destined, by Providence, to be the support of this unfortunate family; and, by the continual exertions of your fortitude and humanity, thus to diminish your own comforts and weaken your health?" I admire you, and I reverence your Mrs. Hardcastle; but your strength of mind is uncommon! "Try it," replied I, "let me hear the whole of this dreadful affair; it cannot be worse than I apprehend." "Nor is it better," answered he; "and we have to guard against surprises. It must be disco-

vered. The public papers will have the intelligence, and Lady Maclairn must be prepared; are you equal to the task?"

"I trust I am," answered I, "otherwise my strength of mind is no virtue." He grasped my hand, and said some words, expressive of his approbation, then proceeded to inform me, that Captain Flint had found on his table the preceding evening, on returning from his sister's, the packet which he now produced. "I was sent for," added the doctor, "and we passed nearly the whole night in reading the contents, and consulting the best means of communicating them to Lady Maclairn. The captain declared he was unable to do it; and thought himself peculiarly disqualified for the office, it being no secret, that he despised the man, and was not surprised at his end. "I have no heart on such occasions," continued Douglass, rising and pacing the room. I have a trick of looking beyond "this di-

urnal sphere," and I hate to announce the death of the wicked. There are the letters ; I will leave you for an hour and then return ; you may want me as a physician."

To the hasty perusal of them, followed my thanks to Providence for the absence of Sir Murdoch ; and without suffering the energy of my mind to relax, I sent for Lady Maclairn to my room. She instantly perceived my emotion, and I at once acknowledged that I had bad news to communicate from Jamaica ; and which Captain Flint was unequal to the task of doing. She gasped for breath. " Nothing can equal," continued I, " Mr. Philip Flint's solicitude for you, thank God ! he has stood the shock : his friends are without alarm for him. Mr. Flamall's death must be supported, my dear Lady Maclairn ; let me see you composed." " It was sudden ?" said she, fixing her eyes on my face, " It was ——— I made no other answer, than falling on her shoulder and

weeping." "It is enough," said she, trembling and sinking from my embrace. I was terrified, for she did not faint as I expected, but with her eyes fixed, and with a deadly groan she articulated the name of Duncan. I immediately perceived the dreadful idea, which had taken possession of her mind. He is at rest, my dear friend," said I, "and now blessed for his faithfulness to you." I was proceeding, but she heard me not. Horror had transfixed her to her seat. She was as cold as marble, and not a tear fell. I rang the bell with violence. The doctor entered at the same moment; he instantly bled her, and she was put into my bed. Douglass watched her, under great uneasiness, until she appeared to me to be dead. I really thought she was, when her eyes closed and her stiffened limbs relaxed. "Take courage," said he, "the worst is passed; she will recover." The event shewed his judgment;

for in a few minutes she burst into violent sobbings, and the death-like coldness of her hand gave place to a friendly perspiration. He gave her a cordial ; and ordering no one to disturb her by speaking, I was left with her. By his orders, I neither checked her tears, nor evaded her enquiries. I believe, however, that she dosed for some time, as not a sigh escaped her. At length, putting aside the curtain, she spoke, and I approached her. " Angel of mercy and goodness," said she, kissing my hand, " tell me, has no one seen my distress ?" " The servants saw you in a fainting state," replied I. " But they never saw me so ill I believe," observed she with anxiety, " Did nothing escape me ?" I satisfied her at once on this point, and at her request briefly, and I think wisely, informed her of the leading events contained in the captain's letters. She wept, and I proceeded. " In this trial of your faith and fortitude," said I,

“ it is not possible you can overlook the merciful Being, who has secured Duncan from guilt, by removing him to an abode of peace.” “ I cannot express my thankfulness,” replied she, “ but I feel the gratitude.—But my wretched lost brother !” She shuddered anew—“ He is before an unerring Judge,” replied I, interrupting her. It neither becomes you nor myself to limit infinite mercy. You are now called upon, by that God of mercy, to submit to his power and to trust in his goodness and compassion. Let it be your concern to perform, with courage, the part assigned you. It has been a difficult one ; but not beyond your strength. Remember that you are still a wife, and a mother ; and your duties will give you patience and peace.”

Emulate the man in whose sorrows you have shared ; “ he was faithful to the end.” Deprive him not of the glory of having loved your reputation and your honour

more than his own. To Lady Maclairn he sacrificed his fondest hopes, his vengeance on his oppressor, his ease in life, and even the name of her faithful Duncan to his last moments. Weep for him ! continued I, with my eyes streaming ; neither religion nor virtue forbid this tribute to his memory ; but live to preserve Sir Murdoch Maclairn's peace. " I would die rather than disturb it," said she with agony. " It is my misery, my past punishment, that whilst my soul mourns the fate of a man ruined by my affection, *another* not less worthy, not less beloved has been involved in all the perils of my miserable condition and conduct. I cannot live without Maclairn's esteem and tenderness ; I cannot die without affecting him. I must still wear the odious cloak of deceit ; I must still impose on his noble unsuspecting nature. Oh fatal consequences of my quitting the paths of truth !" added she, with interrupted sighs ;

“wretched fruits of my weak credulity and childish fears ! Had I been firm, had I shown myself to the world as the reprobated widow of poor Duncan, I should long ere this have smiled at its contempt, or been at peace in my grave. But for what am I not now answerable ?” Not for your brother’s wickedness,” replied I eagerly, “you have a fair account, my dear friend, to set against the errors of your youth ; recollect the place you have filled in society, the years of suffering your tender cares have mitigated, the duties of the mother you have performed, the happiness you have administered ; and I will add, the pangs your courage has sustained in order to effect the tranquillity of others. Secrecy is now a duty, and an obligation enforced upon you, by every motive of virtue and utility. Let me see you, what you may be ; unless, by recalling the past, you destroy your health, and my hopes. The storm is passed ; and

if you experience not the joy of an unclouded sky, yet the evening of your days may be serene and quiet."

She promised me to be all I wished, and to brace every nerve against her husband's return. I think she is more composed to day; and at her request I have been with Miss Flint. As I expected, she began by lamenting her ladyship's sudden indisposition, and added, that Percival also had a cold which prevented her seeing him. I gave her hopes of her sister's speedy recovery, and endeavoured to keep up the conversation; but she soon dosed, which I find she again does half her time, and I left her without being noticed.

Good night, I am going to bed, and to sleep if I can. Mrs. Allen will be with Lady Maclairn. I direct my letters to Sedley. You will understand by the accompaniments my reason for so doing. Mary might wonder at not being trusted; Mr. Sedley will give you this packet.

Adieu. Let me know that the intelligence is secure in your hands. My friend wishes you to keep these with the other papers : she has read them.

I am really quite worn out with one or two night's watching ; but do not fancy me sick, should I be lazy. We expect Sir Murdoch the day after to-morrow ; and I may have too much business on my hands to write to you before Saturday.

LETTER LXV.

*From Mr. Paget to Capt. Percival
Flint.*

(Enclosed in the preceeding.)

DEAR SIR,

Kingston, Jamaica, &c.

THE melancholy contents of this letter will sufficiently account for its being written by a stranger to you. The duty as-

signed to me will, however, at once show me the friend of Mr. Flint, and the painful witness of the distress, into which all his family are plunged.

The sudden death of Mr. Flamall, his uncle, is an event, which, under the *common* circumstances of human life, would require precaution, in the communication of it at *Farefield Hall*. But my poor friend has to dread every thing, lest the catastrophe of his uncle's end, should reach his mother through the channel of the public papers. He conjures you to consult his brother Malcolm in those measures which are necessary to prevent this blow reaching the hall too suddenly for his mother's strength. Before I begin the detail of those particulars, which you will naturally wish to have before you, permit me to have the satisfaction of assuring you, that my *patient*, and I may add my *dearest friend*, Philip Flint, is in a degree recovered from the illness brought on by

the first agitation of his spirits ; his amiable wife is well, and as yet a stranger to the shocking tale. I will now begin my melancholy task.

The arrival of a large vessel in this port, from New York, and commanded by a Captain Nelson, may be assigned as *one* of those cases which have produced the event before me. In consequence of Mr. Flamall's having a concern in the cargo, he was induced to quit his retirement ; and to come to the Creek plantation, near this place. To this circumstance I was a stranger, however, having, as Mr. Flint's friend, dropped a man, generally condemned for his inflexibility ; and at present forgotten by that society, which for some time he had so carefully, and gloomily avoided.

I happened to be at the general rendezvous, a coffee-house here, when a merchant, of the name of Gilpin, an intimate friend of mine, entered, with Cap-

tain Nelson, the newly arrived stranger. I was presented to him by my friend : and, in a way, which the captain and myself both appeared to understand. I found, that Mr. Gilpin had long known this gentleman ; and in a few minutes I thought I had long known him myself, from the frankness of his manner. We were settling our plan for dining together ; when one of the waiters told Mr. Nelson, that “ Mr. Flamall was on horseback at the door, and wished to speak to him for a minute.” The captain instantly obeyed the summons, and, in a few minutes, he returned to the room, and I saw Flamall pass the window. I remarked to some one near me, that he looked ill and dejected. The captain, was now disturbed by a more serious business. Some one in the passage called loudly for assistance ; and the captain was told, that “ his steward was in the agonies of death in the corridor.” We flew to the spot ; and, as a medical man, it became my duty to suc-

cour the sick one. He had been suddenly surprised, by the bursting of a large blood vessel, and the case was critical and justly alarming. I was, however, struck by the uncommon interest which the captain appeared to take in the poor man's preservation. Every accommodation the house could afford was speedily procured; and I saw my patient in a spacious bedroom, with a negro woman for his attendant, whom I knew was a good nurse. Some abatement of the hæmorrhage, having succeeded to bleeding in the arm, and other remedies, I left him to his repose; and joined my friends at Mr. Gilpin's, whose house was not remote from my patient. Captain Nelson listened to my account of him with the utmost anxiety. "I would give half I am worth," said he, grasping my hand, "to save this man." This complaint came on in a moment, they tell me: he was apparently well when I passed him; and that was not five mi-

minutes before you saw him ; those near him say it was a fit ; for they heard him groan, and he rose from his seat, as if to seek air, when he fell back and the blood gushed from his mouth." I saw, in this account, his hopes of the man's recovery ; which I could not encourage, and wished not to depress.

After dinner he attended me to visit him. "I have known this man many years," said he. "I have no doubt of his having been unfortunate ; his education and manners speak the gentleman ; his conduct and industry the honest man. His reserve and dejection have imposed on me a respect for his misfortunes ; and to this hour I only know, that his name is Charles, and that he is *a very extraordinary man* ; for his fidelity to me, has not lessened his influence with my people ; who all love him as their best friend. Tomorrow morning, I shall bring his boy on shore to be with him." "Then he has a

son?" observed I. "One of his adoption," answered he; "and his motives for so doing, will give you his character. I had lost sight of him for some years, having left him in London. In his passage from thence to New York, where, as it appears, he was as poor as when I first saw him, he was a common seaman: one of the crew, a native of New York fell sick and died on the passage, recommending to Charles his aged mother, and his child, *this boy*. He promised to take care of them, and he kept his word; for taking up his abode in the old woman's miserable hovel, he supported the family by his labour. In this situation, I again met him. The death of the woman, and my offer to take the boy with him, induced him to accept the post of ship-steward on board my ship; where he has been several years. You will judge of him as a schoolmaster, when you see George. "Poor lad!" continued the

captain, " he will break his heart ; but I will be his friend."

I returned to my patient, but did not allow him to speak ; he was told that his George would be with him in the morning, and his hand only was offered to the captain.

On entering the room the following day, I found George at his post. The patient was raised by his pillows ; and one of the finest youths, my eyes ever beheld, filled the space they had left. He was bending over the sick man, in an attitude convenient for his head to rest on the lad's shoulder, who was, as I judged, between fifteen and sixteen, and in the full vigour of youth. He raised his penetrating large black eyes to my face, whilst I made my enquiries of the woman, relative to the condition of his father. Her replies were not unfavourable ; and never shall I forget the look of gratitude I then received ! But overcome by his sensibility,

he wept most bitterly, and hid his face. Captain Nelson entered at this moment. "Why, how is this, my boy," cried he endeavouring to hide his feelings, "Did you not promise to have a good heart! The doctor will soon set us all to rights again; so have courage." The *doctor*, my dear Sir, was not so sanguine; but recommending silence and repose took his leave: George assuring me, that he would watch his father's *eyes*, and those would tell him what he wanted. In the evening I was with him again. All was in order, and a silence, like death, prevailed in the room. George was reading a French *Telemachus*; the patient was dosing; and the negro woman was dismissed for some hours of needful rest. The next day I had hopes, that my patient had a chance; but the following morning I found, to my surprise, only the nurse with him. On enquiry, I learned from her, that his father had sent him with a letter to the Creek

plantation. "Why did you not find a porter?" asked I. "Because he said," answered she, in a low whisper, "he could not die contented, unless he knew that it was delivered to Mr. Flammall." Though by no means pleased with this exertion of writing, I said but little to the sick man, contenting myself with his answer. "*I shall write no more.*" I prolonged my stay, partly to supply nurse's absence, whom I sent for something needful, and partly to gratify my curiosity. The sick man's person was calculated to excite it. His physiognomy was noble; his features regular; dark blue eyes, which, though sunk and dimmed by his condition, were expressive of manly fortitude; his hair was of a light chestnut colour, but in places, striped with the signs of age, for it was even changed to nearly white; he was extremely fair; and the paleness of death was relieved, by a lingering colour in his lips. Observing the beauty of

his teeth, I asked him his age. He replied, that he believed he was turned of fifty. He was neatly dressed in a blue and white cotton waistcoat and trowsers; and reclined on the outside of the matrass. A statuary would not have wished for a more perfect model of the human form! He was in height, I should think, within six feet. I observed to him, that his chest was not made to oppress his lungs; and that I flattered myself, the malady which had so suddenly overtaken him, might have for its course, a less dangerous source. He smiled, and said, he had never had any tendency to consumptive symptoms; nor did he ever attribute his want of health to a weak constitution. At this instant George entered, covered with dust, and exhausted by heat and fatigue. He approached the bed, and said, "I have seen Mr. Flamall, and given your letter into his own hand." "It is well:" replied my patient, with an

emotion that alarmed me ; for I was still feeling the pulse, and those would have betrayed it, without the suffusion which passed his cheek. I turned towards George, and after lecturing him with kindness, for his imprudent speed, I insisted on his leaving the room, and laying down for some hours. A sign, from his father which he understood, made him docile, and he retired. Soon after I left the sick room, cautioning the nurse, neither to admit Mr. Flamall nor any message from him or others to reach her charge ; and taking some sherbet in my hand, I sought George's little room. He had obeyed me, and had taken off his clothes. I told him the consequences which would result from any exertion or surprise to his father ; warning him to be on the watch. He said, he did not believe his father expected either a visit, or an answer from the gentleman in question. He had told him not to wait for any orders ; and had appeared

only anxious, that his own letter should reach him safely.

I proceeded to the coffee-house, where, as I expected, I met Captain Nelson. I gave him this detail ; and he thought no more of it, I believe, for he was surrounded by busy faces ; and he told me, that he should be with Charles soon, and would meet me at Mr. Gilpin's before sunset.

I dined with my friend ; and we were quietly conversing, when Captain Nelson bursting into the room, said with agony, " it is all over with him ! nothing can now save him !" I waited not for more intelligence, but seizing my hat, hastily made my way to the sick man, Nelson following me. It was, indeed, " all over with him ;" all our care and attention availed nothing ! For in a few hours he died. Poor Nelson, during this scene of painful suspense, lamented, in terms of the bitterest grief, that he had caused the relapse. He said, that he had found him

quiet and apparently easy. The nurse said George was sound asleep, and mentioned your orders," added the captain. "I asked Charles what were his connexions with Mr. Flamall;" he calmly replied, that he had known him in his youth. "And was that all?" asked I; "come, be open with me, you have had George in your head, I dare say, and fancying to make a friend for the poor lad; but give yourself no concern about him. Let the worst come to the worst, he will never want a father whilst I have a guinea; so try and be a man again, and the brother of one who loves you as a brother." He grasped my hand with convulsive strength. "My God!" said he aloud, "I thank thee, and die satisfied that thou art a God, merciful and gracious!" "The blood again gushed from his mouth; and I flew to Gilpin's."

I will pass over the sorrow of his poor George, in order to hasten to the next still

more serious and shocking event. *Mr. Sinclair*, the brother of my patient, Mrs. Flint, brought me a summons to "Upland," the residence of the family, prepared to expect hourly the lady's want of my assistance. I accompanied her brother home; but found Mrs. Flint, though in her own apartment, with her female friends, perfectly contented with my being within the house. The interval was devoted to my friend Philip's amusement, whose anxiety for the safety of his wife was apparent. We were rallying him on this subject; and drinking to the health of his expected blessing, when Mr. Sinclair was called from the table. I will pass over the detail. Juba, an old and freed slave of the late Mr. Cowley's, but who has from his master's death remained in his post of superintendant at the Creek house, was the bearer of the intelligence which follows; and which you will conceive produced the most dreadful sensations of horror and

surprise. "Mr. Flamall was dead, and by his own hand!" Sinclair and myself lost no time, in returning with Juba, leaving Mr. Flint to the care of Mr. Lindsey, and Mr. Montrose, his friends, and inmates.

On the road Juba gave us the following particulars. On the preceding morning, he it was, who saw George, who enquired of him for Mr. Flamall, saying, he had a letter to deliver to him, which he was ordered to give to no other person. "I asked the lad from whom he had received his commission," continued the faithful Juba, and he replied, from Captain Nelson's steward. Knowing that we had many bales in his ship, I immediately concluded, that the letter referred to business, relative to these goods; and I was on the point of telling the young man, that I would be answerable for the safety of the letter; but at that moment, Mr. Flamall appeared, and took it himself. I shall be

at Kingston to day, said he, holding the letter carelessly in his hand, and shall speak to your captain. The lad bowed, and was retreating; when Mr. Flamall asked him to rest, and take some refreshment. He declined the offer, replying that his father would want him. I entered the house; and he departed. Mr. Flamall was not long, I believe, before he went to his apartment. He saw no one for some hours; at length he rang his bell, and ordered his horse to be prepared. We have lately observed him as a man struggling with something wrong in his mind. He has been very odd at times; and his groom said, he was in one of his silent fits; and chose to go by himself. He did not return home, till a late hour in the evening. The horse appeared heated and fatigued. He went to his bed room, saying, that he wanted nothing then, and should ring in the morning, when he did. Hour succeeded hour. We heard him pacing in

the library ; and we began to fear that all was not right with him. His servant was curious, as well as uneasy ; he stopped me on the staircase, to tell me, that he had peeped through the key hole, that his master was in his wrapping gown and night cap, and was writing, and with a countenance that made him tremble : another servant was going to make his observations by the same means," continued poor Juba, " when the report of a pistol checked him, and appalled us all. We burst into the room. It was too late ! you will see such a corpse ! I lost not, however, my presence of mind ; one look at the shattered mangled head of the poor wretch was enough for me ! But whilst others were gazing on the scene of horror, I secured the written papers on his desk ; which I will now give you."

Juba drew the rumpled sheets of paper from his bosom, and presented them to Mr. Sinclair. It is needless for me to

add, that the horrid explosion, had done its work. The aim was sure !

Herewith, you have the copies of the two letters above mentioned. Mr. Sinclair recommends caution to you in respect to their *mysterious* contents.

I shall have perhaps time to add something more to this letter ; but lest I be mistaken, receive, Sir, the unfeigned regard, and sympathy of your very humble servant,

THOMAS PAGET.

LETTER LXVI.

(*Enclosed in Mr. Paget's.*)

To Mr. Flamall.

SHOUDEST thou start, Flamall, at the sight of these well known characters, for my hand, like my heart, has but *one*

for my purposes. Should thy knees tremble, and the blood recede in terror from thy cheek, bless Heaven ! Hail these indications of its mercy ! Thou hast not yet outlived humanity, thou art not yet abandoned to everlasting destruction. Be it so ! Oh God, infinite in goodness, almighty in power !

Were I certain, Flamall, that with the form of man there were yet one single spark left unextinguished of *the spirit of a man*, I would invite thee to my dying couch, for it is near thee. I would bid thee compare it with thy nightly bed of prosperous villany. And here settle those accounts of the guardianship and *gains*. Though for years in bondage, I have been free from guilt. No parent will demand from me a ruined oppressed son ; no confederate in vice and cruelty and treachery will point *to me* as the betrayer of his soul ! But thou wilt recal to memory the issue

of thy crimes ; and the names of thy agents in mischief.

I die in peace. My wife knows my innocence and my wrongs. If it be needful for thy repentance, apply to her ; and with the tale of thy brotherly care, of an innocent, and virtuous orphan-sister, thou mayest have the relation of the woes thou hast inflicted on thy *ward Charles*.

Detain not the messenger : I wait his return to breathe my last sigh on his faithful bosom. Thou hast been defeated, **Flamall !** The tear of affection will fall on my remains ; and I shall be remembered as one who has not lived to be the fell destroyer of my fellow-man, nor as one abandoned by his Maker.

LETTER LXVII.

*From Mr. Flamall to Mr. Philip
Flint.*

(Enclosed in Mr. Paget's.)

HORROR ! unutterable horror ! anguish, despair ! Twist not thus my brain ! he is dead ! and died with his hopes ! expecting to be welcomed in a new existence, by assembled angels, hailed by spirits like his own, and received by a God of mercy who will recompense his long sufferings and faith.—Delusions all ! The tales of the nursery made up for children ! I reject them. When these atoms which compose this palpitating frame are disunited I shall be at peace : for I shall be *nothing*. But wherefore do I pause ?

What is to me the world to which I now cleave? Why does my heart turn to thee, Philip? I know thou *also* abhorrest me, yet I would not have thee curse me, for of all men, I have a claim to thy pity. I love thee still. I would bless thee, but I dare not. For if there be a God, whose awful indignation takes cognizance of sin; my blessing would be converted into a malediction on thy head. Blot me from thy memory; acknowledge not the name of Flamall, nor permit thy children to know, that I was once thy guide, thy friend — Nay — Distraction! Why do I hesitate —

Mr. Paget in continuation.

It is needless to make any comments on the foregoing letters. It is but too apparent, that Flamall was the aggressor; beyond this all is conjecture. We have, on our part, acted with caution. Captain Nelson has been questioned closely, as to

his knowledge of the person, supposed to have been the cause of the dreadful end of Mr. Flamall. He repeated, on oath, his evidence in favour of this unknown, and adhered to the account he had before given me of his acquaintance with him; adding, that he had not a doubt of his having been an injured man. His sorrow, for his loss, was not concealed; for he even shed tears, and with an oath affirmed, that not only himself but every man in his ship had lost a brother. Poor George was with him, and looked the picture of despair: he was examined also: he had never heard his father and protector name Mr. Flamall until the morning he gave him the letter. Not a single paper was found in his chest, except a note, in which he gives, with his blessing, his little property of clothes, linen, and a few books to this boy. Thus, has every enquiry terminated. I cannot help believing, that you will be gratified by knowing, that

Captain Nelson means to protect the lad in question.

Mr. Flamall has been careful to leave no traces behind him, that may help to elucidate this mystery, or throw a light on any other of his private concerns. Not a paper, nor a letter escaped his vigilant cautions. Juba tells us, that from the time his nephew's marriage was announced, he has suspected his mind to have been deranged at times, and that he was continually reading and burning letters and papers when in his room. One striking proof of his former connexion with the unfortunate stranger, Charles, is much talked of. He called at the house where he lodged and died; and to the enquiries he made concerning the sick man, one of the servants answered, that he was dead. He said, he wished to see him, having known him in his youth. The negro woman attended him to the deceased man's room. He looked atten-

tively at the corpse ; appeared agitated, and sighing said, “ his troubles are over.” But such was the impression the object before him had produced, that he left the house, and forgot his horse, which he had tied to the door he had passed. A waiter perceiving it, followed him with the animal ; he mounting, and without speaking, put him on his full speed.

THOMAS PAGET.

CHAP. XI.

LETTER LXVIII.

From Capt. Sinclair to Capt. Flint.

MY DEAR SIR,

Jamaica.

OUR worthy and zealous friend Mr. Paget having spared me the painful detail of events, which, of late, have rendered this abode of peace one of sorrow and consternation, I will employ my pen on subjects of better and renewed hopes. In the first place, Lady Maclairn will be soothed by hearing, that Philip is the father of a fine healthy boy ; and that the mother is doing well, and already the nurse. She has been cautiously told of

Mr. Flamall's death; and thus the suspense and alarm avoided, that would have been occasioned by her seeing her husband's dejection, which was but too apparent, in spite of his endeavours. We must give him credit for more sensibility on this melancholy occasion, than we feel ourselves. To say the truth, the termination of a life passed without honour or satisfaction, is, in my opinion, little entitled to the tear of affection; although the means, which Flamall employed for the purpose, are appalling to nature and to the Christian. It is a happy circumstance for my brother, that he has uniformly conducted himself in respect to his uncle, so as to have secured his own self acquittal. This, with the prospect of happiness, before his eyes, will, in time, restore him. We shall, however, wait with anxiety for news from Farefield. Had not his wife's critical situation checked his solicitude for his mother, I believe we could not have

prevented his undertaking the voyage to England, for the purpose of supporting her, in the trial which nearly overset himself.

I beg you to be particular in your account of Lady Maclairn's health, as also Miss Flint's.

Let Miss Cowley be assured, that her concerns will suffer nothing from the loss of *her agent*. We have been fortunate in having with us a *Mr. Montrose*; this gentleman is the early friend of Philip and Margaret; and is brother to Mrs. Lindsey, my sister's first nurse, and constant companion at present.

Montrose makes a better consoler than myself. I therefore yield up to him this office; as being his by profession; and no man can better know, and perform his duty. I have not, however, been idle. The attested papers you will receive with this, will inform you that all has been done that could be done. Flamall's late gloom

and the evidence of the servants, induced the coroner's inquest to give in a verdict of lunacy. We have discovered no letters nor papers of consequence, to his private concerns; and one letter excepted, of a recent date, from his banker, which mentions his having received the half year's interest of five thousand pounds Bank stock: this of course devolves to his sister. I cannot conclude this letter, without telling you, that I believe, from the order in which all Flamall's accounts were, that he has, for sometime, been meditating how to escape from a world, in which he knew he was regarded with contempt. You may think me too harsh; be it so. But believe me sincere and honest, and

Your's to command,

FRANCIS SINCLAIR.

LETTER LXIX.

From Dr. Douglass to Mr. Hardcastle.

Farefield, Dec. 30.

I conjure you, my dear Sir, to rely on my assurances. Miss Cowley is entirely out of danger. We have a decided intermission, and are hourly gaining on the enemy. But I will not disguise my fears, for the consequences which will probably result from you and Miss Hardcastle's visit here at this time. The truth is, that as terror and exertions beyond Miss Cowley's strength, produced the fever, it is my opinion, that joy, and a new demand on her feelings, will produce *a return of it*. Calmness and repose are necessary to give efficacy to the medicines which have hitherto been useful, and I entreat of you,

to postpone your journey, till my patient is more able to welcome you.

To say what this young creature's fortitude has been, is beyond my abilities! I only know, that I shall in future blush, when I hear strength of mind called a *masculine endowment*.

You will easily imagine, how little prepared she was, after the attention and exertions she had shown to Lady Maclairn, to sustain the sudden terror, which Miss Flint's death produced. Every precaution had been used to prevent the intelligence of Mr. Flamall's death, from reaching the dying woman. She was so weak, as to bear with apathy her sister's absence from the room; indeed, she noticed little those who were about her, being for the most part in a lethargic stupor, and gradually sinking. In the neighbourhood it was, however, no secret that Mr. Flamall had *died suddenly*. Warner, Miss Flint's woman, had in the morning left

her post to a chamber maid, in order to get some repose. This girl's mother had been frequently employed in the sick room, and she, on calling to see her daughter, was directed where to find her. Miss Flint was heavily dosing, and the women, though with precaution, *as they say*, talked of poor Lady Maclairn's illness, and the melancholy news from Jamaica. The visitor had heard the report, which has circulated here, and which a London newspaper has communicated to the public. Namely, that, "Mr. Flamall was assassinated by a negro, whom he had too severely treated." I suspect the precaution of whispering this tale was forgotten, in the eagerness of curiosity and the love of the marvellous. Suddenly, they were alarmed by a faint scream from the sick woman, who, with convulsive groans and agitations, said, "dead! murdered! lost! for ever lost! Flamall!" Screams followed this apostrophe, and the

terrified girl ran to Miss Cowley's room. She was unfortunately sleeping on the sofa, after having passed the greater part of the night by Lady Maclairn's bed side. She rose with firmness to perform the duty to which she was summoned; not permitting Mrs. Allen to be informed of what was passing; because she was with Lady Maclairn. I found her calm and collected; sitting by the dying Miss Flint, whose senses were lost before she ceased to breathe. Let me finish this melancholy detail, by saying, that I did not quit Miss Cowley's bed side for the space of six and thirty hours. Heaven was merciful! and she will be restored to health. But we must have no beloved friends to greet at present.

I quit you to obey the summons of my *precious* patient. She insists upon signing this bulletin. She will soon be well; for she is growing saucy, and this morning, at four o'clock, when I carried her the

prescribed potion, she told me "that in my night cap and gown, I was the very image of Blue Beard; and still more savage than he; for, that his scymitar was nothing in comparison with my glass of poison." Judge with what contentment of mind I now sign the name of your sincere

ARCHIBALD DOUGLASS.

P. S. Indeed, my dear Lucy, I am getting well. They tell me, the wind is still against the Lisbon packet's sailing. How fortunate I am! There! the whole junto are rising! and the inkstand has vanished. Your's! your own R. Cowley is, indeed, only too weak to mutiny against this authority.

LETTER LXX.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

IT is with gratitude to Heaven, that I find my dear friends at Heathcot, are relieved from their too tender anxieties and apprehensions on my account, yet wherefore do I say "too tender," I recall the words, my Lucy, which my heart does not sanction, and I will not assume a virtue I have not; I give you joy, that death has spared to you your Rachel Cowley. I rejoice in your love; and I participate in your present feelings. Your goodness to Horace has contributed towards my restoration. I should have died, had you mentioned your terrors to him.

I have written to him the state of affairs here. He will be satisfied, that the recent

events, in which I have been engaged, occasioned the brevity of my letter.

Mrs. Heartly sends her love to you with the enclosed: she insists, that you will be better pleased with it, than with *my labours*. They have, amongst them, annihilated the self will of your

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER LXXI.

From Mr. Serge to Mrs. Heartley.

(Enclosed in the preceding.)

MADAM,

Putney.

I make no doubt, but that you have heard Mr. Maclairn mention his friend Jeremiah Serge; and that you are con-

vinced, I mean to deserve my title. I shall, therefore, enter into the business before us at once. Herewith you will receive the deeds, which secure to your daughter and her children the estate called the Wenland Farm, now occupied by Malcolm Maclairn; the day she becomes that gentleman's wife, he is her tenant and his children's steward. Counsellor Steadman has managed this affair for me, to my entire satisfaction, and I trust it will not be less so to my young friend.

I have, for the first time, during many long weeks, felt that the Almighty has yet the means in his hands with which to heal my wounds. I never, Mrs. Heartley, had a son; I have not, like Sir Murdoch, had a son like his Malcolm, to follow me in my feeble steps, with duty and affection; nor try to perpetuate my name, and his own virtues to children unborn; but I had a child, who was, whilst she lived, the joy and the prop of my life!

But you know what I have had to suffer! I am forgetting the object of this letter.

From the first hour I knew Mr. Malcolm Maclairn, I took a liking to him; this goodwill was, in part, owing to the favourable character I had of him from my excellent friend, Counsellor Steadman. Some particulars I learned from this gentleman, led me to think that it was in my power to serve this worthy young man; and with this intention, and *other thoughts* in my mind, I paid my visit to Farefield Hall. I was in part-disappointed in my scheme; but I saw the young man was *all*, and *more*, than I expected, and I gave him my heart, though I could not give him my daughter's hand. I thought I had explained myself to his good father, in regard to my views in assisting the son; but I perceived, that Sir Murdoch had a little of the infirmity, which is common to men of high birth; so I consulted the

counsellor, and did what I could without offending the baronet's high spirit.

Believing that you are a very judicious lady, I request from you the favour, in case you should see the good baronet's scruples, to say what, in truth, you may affirm, that you perceive nothing in my conduct, that ought either to offend, or surprise him.

Some men, with less wealth than I possess, keep fine houses, fine madams, and fine horses; buy fine pictures, and plant fine gardens. Now, Mrs. Heartley, I have no taste nor pleasure in these things; seeing I was not brought up to like, or understand them; but this is no reason why my money should be useless to me, and if I can purchase, by my superfluity, the happiness of having such a friend as Malcolm Maclairn, I should be a fool not to have done what I have done. So, heartily wishing the young couple happy,

and recommending to your fair daughter to marry her tenant directly,

I remain, your sincere,

JEREMIAH SERGE.

LETTER LXXII.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

January 12.

MY patience is recompensed. "I may write half an hour, seeing that scribbling is the aliment some girls live upon." This is my kind doctor, Lucy; and if you had seen how grateful I was for this indulgence, you would be of Mrs. Heartley's opinion, who has pronounced my fever *good for something*; for that it has

saved Lady Maclairn's life ; and, as you may perceive, has taught me to submit. Blessed be God for the renewal of that life, which is so dear to my friends ! and which I may, if it be not my fault, still render a blessing to them and myself.

We are once more in sight of the harbour of peace ; not indeed of that peace which " this world can neither give nor take away," but of that season of tranquillity, which, in mercy, is allotted to man, in order, as it should seem, to give us time to refit our feeble bark, and to rectify the chart, to which we have hitherto trusted ; to recover by repose, strength and vigour for the storms and perils we may yet have to encounter in our passage to eternity ; and to leave behind us traces of that providential power which hath piloted us home.

You will like to have the particulars of Miss Flint's will. It will satisfy you, as it has done me, that a death-bed repent-

ance is *much better than none*. She specifies, that, in consideration of her brother Oliver's donation to Philip Flint, it appears to be an incumbent duty on her part, to provide for those of her family, who have been *too long neglected*, and to the last moment of her mortal life, will she bless Philip Flint, for having seconded her in this act of justice, by his advice and concurrence.

The Farefield estate, with the moveables, besides a considerable sum in money, which will devolve on him as residuary legatee, are left to Captain Flint for his life ; at his decease they go to Philip Flint, to whom she has only bequeathed five thousand pounds "as a token of her love." To her niece Mary the same sum, payable when she is of age, and five *more* at her uncle's decease. To Malcolm MacLairn two thousand pounds, "as a *mark* of her esteem for him, and gratitude to his mother." By the way, poor Malcolm

was nearly overpowered by this *mark*, for he had not mourned as one who needed comfort; and I suspect that his conscience was not quite prepared for the legacy.

To the poor of the parish she has left a liberal peace offering: to her servants she has been generous and just: to Warner, her woman, she leaves a thousand pounds.

Flamall's execrable name does not appear in any paper that is left; and yet the contents of the cabinet left to Lady Mac-lairn's inspection, clearly prove that Miss Flint had long been engaged by the thoughts of death. Not a *friend* has been overlooked but Flamall, and it is evident to me, that she ceased to regard him even in that point of view, from the time he declared his marriage. I suspect she was informed of his baseness in that business. All her little donations were marked and ticketed by her own hand. To Sir Murdoch she leaves a very fine seal; its antiquity as well as beauty, make it valuable.

To Mrs. Allen a gold snuff box, containing an hundred pound bank note, "for mourning;" for Miss Cowley a diamond ring. To each of Douglass's boys a hundred guineas for books, and three hundred pounds in notes, for their worthy father. A small box, directed "to my niece, Mary Howard, as a token of my too late repentance and unfeigned love." The captain, who was present when her ladyship performed this painful office, was so much affected by the sight of this box, that he burst into tears, and, with extreme agitation, tore off the address, and put it in his bosom. Philip Flint had not been overlooked in this partition of kindness. Her picture in miniature, taken at the time he was born, with a rich string of pearls that had been her mother's, were marked for him and his wife. We have since examined Mary's gift. Some fine lace, and a few family jewels are the principal things. When you have cautiously

informed her, that, from her aunt's hand, she has restored to her what she will judge to be *invaluable*, namely, her father's and mother's pictures, so long lost ! so deeply regretted ! But I am called to order ; and you will be contented with this four day's labour of your poor shackled Rachel Cowley ; who is bound, though in silken fetters. You know that the Heartleys are here. I gain nothing by that ; for they are as bad as any of my argus-eyed nurses.

P. S. My dear Miss Hardcastle, we have now only to fear that our patient should be *too soon* well. She has no fever, but that which arises from her exertions. She cannot *vegetate*, to use her own word ; and she thinks her body is strong, because her mind is never idle. It is in vain that we oppose her. She will write ; and then who can wonder that she does not sleep ! Use your

influence, and give us time to recruit her strength.

Yours,

A. HEARTLEY.

Mrs. Allen is in good spirits. She has left me nothing to say in regard to Doctor Douglass. But, I verily believe, his care saved the life of our precious friend. She was, indeed, for some hours, so ill as to leave little for hope. I leave Alice to express, to my dear Mary, all that my full heart feels on her account.

CHAP. XII.

LETTER LXXIII.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

January 29.

ALTHOUGH in the calculation of months and weeks, I have contrived to beguile the lagging hours which are still between me and my promised bliss, I have not yet been able to find an expedient for the day, without scribbling to you. It seems to be the aliment necessary for my existence ; and notwithstanding I could match an hungry school boy, in my appetite for my pudding, I could sooner console myself for the absence of my dinner, than of the use of my right hand, as

the agent of my fondest, sweetest employment. I have written a volume to Horace ; and he will know as much of the occurrences at Farefield, as will content him. He will know that I am in health and in hope. Say not a word of my having been so ill. The old bard says, "men are deceivers ever." A woman therefore, may *for once deceive*, when in that deceit, she spares to a beloved object the useless anxiety arising from past danger and past pains.

Yesterday our "busy-heads" went to Wenland-place, in order to give their opinion of certain alterations and improvements projected by the new tenant Malcolm. I was ordered to stay at home by my despotical doctor, and Lady MacLairn promised to take *good* care of me.

They departed after breakfast, meaning to dine at Mr. Wilson's, and left us to a danger, as bad as cold rooms. I soon found it impossible to evade the topic I so much dreaded for her ; she at once

led to the subject by saying, that she had still secrets to communicate to her only comforter, but that she feared my sensibility. I desired her to proceed. "Some time before my sister's death," continued she, "I received this sealed parcel from her hands. It is, as you see, addressed to myself. I hesitated when she offered it to my acceptance. She observed my reluctance." "Make yourself perfectly easy," said Miss Flint, "it contains nothing but papers essentially necessary for your future security. I cannot die, without telling you that they are *necessary*. You do not know your brother, Harriet, so well as I do ; and I must tell you, what steps I have taken to secure you from his future tyrannical power. I shall die, however, without bitterness of spirit. I once loved Flamall ; I do not accuse him here ; nor will I accuse him *hereafter* ; for my own envy, my own implacable spirit, my own stubborn and hard heart prepared the way for the influence of his inordinate

purposes, and more deliberate mischiefs. As a father, he has been equally base and cruel. Philip has informed me of the measures he pursued, in order to gratify his ambition in regard to his son's marriage with Miss Cowley. Let it suffice, that they were such as did not surprise me. I immediately wrote to Mr. Flamall. You will find a copy of my letter amongst those papers. He knows, that I have, by a full and ample confession of my crimes, so implicated them with those which he has committed, as must ruin him in this world, if discovered; and as inevitably destroy his hopes of a better, if he do not repent. Should he ever dare to disturb the comforts of my son, by a declaration of his real affinity to him; should he ever dare farther to invade on your peace; he knows what must be the consequence. Actions, which will be recognisable in a court of justice, will determine his fate, and crush with ignominy his worthy and unoffending

child. Obdurate as he is in sin, nature is not extinguished in his bosom. He loves his son, and, I am certain, would sooner die himself, than see him disgraced in the world : time may soften to him his present disappointment. I have urged to Philip every possible measure, in order to effect a reconciliation between him and his *uncle* Flamall. He may, if he be wise, live on good terms with his son, and if he be not lost to conscience, he may find employment, for his remaining term of grace." " You weep, my dear Harriet," continued my poor Lucretia ; I cannot. How many bitter tears of yours will swell my account ; for I was born for your sorrow ! and the ruin of the innocent ! Can you give comfort to the broken and contrite of heart ? Can you say you forgive me ? " As freely," answered I eagerly, " as I hope for mercy and pardon. I have also sinned, I have also erred." " Yes," replied she, with quickness ; " but the snare

was laid for you ; and you only stumbled. I boldly invited the danger, and made an acquaintance with guilt and perfidy ; see to what purpose ? to languish with a mother's yearnings, to behold and bless that child, who would shrink from me as a monster, did he know me ; to dread the future, and to mourn, too late, the wretchedness annexed to a life of guilt. Promise me," added she, " to be still my Philip's mother. Let me die in the hope, that, you will never forego the title." " Never," answered I, sensible only to her condition, " never, whilst it depends on me to preserve it ; he is mine in affection, and nothing can cancel his rights to my love." " May Heaven reward you," exclaimed she, in an agony. " May that child's children bless and revere you——My poor boy will not be surprised at the tenor of my last will," continued she, thoughtfully. " He is rich ; and I have explained my intentions, in regard to my brother and

Mary. It required very few arguments to prove, that they had not been justly treated. But let me not think of their wrongs ! I wrote him word, that it was essentially necessary to my peace to consider them. His last letter was a cordial to my sinking soul ; he urges me even to omit his name, if it interfered with my kind purposes ; that he possessed *more* than he wanted of the goods of fortune. Judge, adds he, when I tell you that my brother has frequently realized fourteen thousand pounds annually from his estates : Judge whether, my dear, I may say maternal friend and sister, needs bequeath me more *than her blessing and her love.*” “I wear at my heart this precious letter,” added she, taking it from her bosom ; “but you must take it with the papers. His picture may yet remain, I mean it should moulder into dust with me”—She paused—“I think,” pursued she, as though collecting herself, “that I may hope to stand ac-

quitted before my Maker for the last and only compensation I can make to some, whom I have injured ; perhaps *strict* justice would exact more *sacrifices*. But I am a mother, Harriet ; the guilty mother, of an innocent child, now a worthy member of society. Something is surely due to him ; and thy merciful Maker will not weigh this consideration in the balance of offended justice. Such has been my state of mind for some time past, that had it not been for Philip, I would have fearlessly met every stigma with which this world could have branded me, for the hopes of meeting with a reconciled God. It becomes not me to say, that I think, in this instance of my conduct, I have acted right. But conscience has at least been my guide ; I have done for the best. Will not that prudence, which will protect the honour of your family, and the happiness of mine, sanction your secrecy in regard to the birth of thy poor——!" She could

not go on. Again I soothed her to composure, I solemnly repeated my promise, my dear Miss Cowley, that I would preserve our secret from every danger of a disclosure. "This engagement now distresses me," continued Lady Maclairn, "I fear I have been wrong; but what could I do, in a moment of such difficulty? I was unequal to the trial; I could not see her die miserable."—

I placed before Lady Maclairn the wonderful interference of Providence, which had removed the guilty, to secure the innocent. I urged to her the purity of her intentions, and the humanity which pointed out to her the line of conduct she had pursued, and had engaged to pursue. "Repose on your merciful Maker," added I, "for an acquittal, where you mean to do for the best; patiently wait the end, when this darkness shall be removed; and you will, I trust, find, that having lived to promote the happiness of others, to

have contributed to the comfort and security of your family has not been to live in vain. Be assured, my dear friend, that your sufferings will have their place with a Being "who knoweth what is in man ; and with a Father, who loveth his children, you may reasonably hope for acceptance and favour." " You are my comforter," replied she, meekly raising her eyes to Heaven ; " I have not outlived this first of all human hopes. My weakness, not my will, has betrayed me from the paths of rectitude. But it is difficult for me, to conceal my feelings. I dare not even break the seal, which confines my knowledge to what I already know of the wretched life and conduct of my brother ; I sometimes think I shall lose my senses, in reflecting on his end, and the enormities of his conduct. Oh, it is dreadful, Miss Cowley, to follow him to that tribunal before which he must appear !—— Leave me for a while," added she, sobbing,

“leave me to my God, to my Almighty supporter”——I obeyed, too much affected to resist. I took the papers with me. She has acted prudently in not reading them. She begs they may be forwarded to you, and that the whole transaction may remain in your hands. You are allowed to read them. What will you say to the letter marked No. 4? The one she burned was the answer to it; but I dare not pursue this horrid subject. My eyes would betray me, and the doctor would be angry; for he has made me promise not to harrass my spirits, and to check my friend’s sorrows. I am going to her! and we will be wise. The return of the vagrants renders this necessary.

Yours,

RACHEL COWLEY.

P. S. Sedley will give you this.

LETTER LXXIV.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

AGAIN I am permitted to take a better cordial than bark. Mrs. Heartley has fully explained to us the mystery relative to the portraits in Miss Flint's possession. It appears that Mrs. Howard, apprehending that they would be more pernicious to her brother, than consolatory, requested Mrs. Heartley to secrete them from his search. She obeyed her dying friend. "But," added Mrs. Heartley, "my feelings at this juncture were nearly as little under the controul of my reason, as poor Percival's. I wrote a letter to Miss Flint, which was dictated by my sorrow, and the romantic hope of touching her heart in favour of a child whom she had contributed to render

an *orphan* and a *beggar*. I enclosed these powerful pleaders," continued Mrs. Heartley, taking up the miniatures, and surveying them with emotion, "and my language was not less forcible. Malcolm was employed to place my packet in her hands. He effected his purpose; for she found it on her dressing table. The next morning he was questioned, and he frankly owned, that he had, at my request, placed the parcel where she had found it. You have been faithful, Sir, in the performance of your commission, said Miss Flint, trembling and pale with fury; "be so in delivering my message *to your Mrs. Heartley*. Tell her, that her insolent and officious interference has failed, and that whilst Miss Flint's family have no better advocates than a kept mistress, she wants no apology for renouncing it." Malcolm bluntly told her, that she must employ some one to deliver such a message who had never heard of Mrs. Heartley; for

himself, he begged leave to decline insulting his best friend. I heard no more from Miss Flint; and I concluded that she had destroyed the portraits in a similar manner as she had that of her mother. Frustrated in my project, I was forced to conceal this occurrence; and the pictures were supposed to be irrecoverably and unaccountably lost."

Although my conscience reproached me frequently when hearing the captain bewail this loss, it never did so as to the motive from which I had acted: but it is to be feared, that my zeal in the cause of the injured, disqualified me for making a convert to justice and humanity. It is most probable that I irritated where I wished to heal; and it is certain, that I was from that time the object of Miss Flint's implacable resentment. Poor woman!" continued Mrs. Heartley, with compassion, "she was then under the miserable yoke of those passions, which

although they *govern*, cannot *blind us*. Neither her spirit of resentment, nor any entrenchment from her prosperous fortune, could shield her from the voice within her bosom. It spoke my language with ten-fold energy, and she hated me, because she knew I was in unison with her conscience. She shunned me, as she would have shunned *that*, had she been able. Is it not unaccountable," added Mrs. Heartley, addressing me, "that any rational being should fear to encounter the eyes of a fellow creature under the circumstances of guilt, nay, even of folly, without considering the power of conscience, from whose suggestions this very dread arises. That Miss Flint was sensible of its power is certain. Nor do I believe, with some, that it is possible for us to outlive its authority. When I hear of such, who are said to be hardened by sin, and become callous by guilt, I no more believe it, than I do those tales I hear

of the elixir for perpetuating our existence here for ever. I am convinced that God will not be mocked by the creatures of his power, and I have only to follow the bold and impious offender of his laws to his hours of privacy, to learn, that he cannot evade that Being's presence, whose commands he insults." I was more disposed to shorten this conversation, than to dispute the truths it contained. Lady Maclairn's conscience wants no stimulants. Douglass entered, and we became cheerful. You love the doctor, you say, prithee who does not ? but no one shall love him so well as Horace. You have heard of his gallantry three or four nights he past in my antichamber !

RACHEL COWLEY.

LETTER LXXV.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

I AM, my dear friend, so powerfully impressed by the perusal of Miss Flint's *confession*, as her legacy to Lady Maclairn may with truth be called, that I cannot divert my mind from the subject. What a scene of iniquity have I sent you ! and how rejoiced am I, that I prevailed on Lady Maclairn not to tear open those wounds afresh by reading a detailed account of actions and artifices which her brother employed to defraud Mr. Flint's children of their rights. Surely, my Lucy, the death of Flamall was "a consummation devoutly to be wished." To be removed from the indignation of the injured, to be spared from the abhorrence

of the virtuous ; to be saved from the constant dread of living an object amenable to the most vigorous laws of his country ; to be freed from the horrors of his dying bed ! But how momentary is this delusion of feeling ! My reason and my faith point out this disembodied spirit in its next state of existence. With trembling awe I follow it to the tribunal of an all-wise, omnipotent, and pure Judge. There do I contemplate this forlorn and sullied soul, as rushing uncalled into the presence of that Being, whose merciful purposes he has counteracted ; and whose laws he has insulted. Nature stands appalled, at the magnitude of offences like these ; and humanity must deplore the sinner thus cut off in the midst of his sins."

I cannot however help being of opinion that, useful as the contemplation of a Flamall's life may be to beings who fearlessly follow the impulse of every disorder-

ly passion, *we*, my beloved Lucy, shall not be unwise, to direct our thoughts from such shocking depravity of creatures like ourselves. I wish so to do ; and yet not lose the lesson of wisdom as applicable to myself. In what, I would ask you, consisted the difference between Miss Flint and Rachel Cowley at two years of age. The general lineaments of our minds have a near affinity. What has produced the moral differences which from that period have discriminated us ? Education, and the habits resulting from our respective situations : in the one instance, the soil was left uncultured ; in the other, it was judiciously cultivated. Lucretia had been overlooked by her mother in the early period of her life. Indolence and indulgence were this mother's faults. She found, in cultivating the docile and mild Percival, a gratification of her own taste, and an object of amusement, as well as for exclusive tenderness.

This mother wanted firmness, and the vigilance necessary for her duty. When passion had taken its root, this unhappy creature was consigned over to the care and tuition of a schoolmistress. I mean not to be illiberal; for I believe many women in that class of life are not only accomplished women, but conscientiously disposed to be useful to their pupils; but I cannot think that in a large school, either the temper, or peculiar moral defects of a girl are likely to meet with that nice and accurate observation which are necessary for their correction. I will however admit that in this seminary Miss Flint acquired the outward habits of decorum, and that knowledge, which, with experience, and a different temper, might have conducted her, as it does multitudes of our sex, in the common routine of private and domestic life. She then returned to her parents, slenderly furnished by the gifts of nature, with a spirit unsubdued.

and a mind without any fixed principle of action, beyond a confidence in herself. She was next a candidate for favour in the world ; and she proudly conceived that no one would dare refuse it ; but she found a rival, even in the cradle, and under the parental roof. Is it to be expected, that from such a disposition, and under such circumstances, envy and malice could be long a stranger to her ? The mother perceived their baneful influence ; and she opposed to their growth, nothing but remedies which relieved herself from trouble and vexation. She *flattered* instead of *reproving*, and gave to her daughter an authority which she knew she would abuse. Uncontrouled and domineering over those about her ; irritated by the neglect of those whom she could not subjugate to her imperious will, she became soured, disappointed, and vindictive ; and she finished by becoming the fit instrument in the hands of a Flammall, for the ruin of

the innocent, and the perpetration of injustice, cruelty, and deceit.

Thus have we seen the fatal torrent of unchecked passions flow! but suppose this wretched victim of their fury had been in Mrs. Hardcastle's hands. Oh Lucy, we want no supposition! We have seen a *torrent*, not less impetuous, directed by her wisdom, to the salutary purposes for which Heaven gave it strength and abundance; and instead of desolating all within its reach, it has been led to supply delight, and satisfaction! How often has her patient firmness subdued my angry passions? How often has she detected them before I knew their power! With what skill did she temper and mix the warm affections of my nature with the rougher elements which composed me. How sweet; how endearing was her notice of every little triumph I gained over myself; and with what discrimination did she effect that bond of love, which made her

children useful to each other. Her Lucy's gentleness was opposed to her Rachel's *courage*; and Horace's self-command was the only point to which emulation was recommended. Is it wonderful, that I have escaped the fate of a Miss Flint? Is it wonderful that I should love virtue, and reverence a faith thus exemplified? No, Lucy. But I have to fear, lest I should disgrace Mrs. Hardcastle. We may, and I hope we shall, live to be wives and mothers. Let us in that case, aim at being something better than mere teeming animals; and like some in that class, who, following their instinct, squeeze their offspring to death through fondness. I am persuaded that we are weak and fallible creatures; but I cannot for an instant admit, that an all-wise and merciful Being has exacted any *one duty*, or enforced any *one command*, without having bestowed upon us the faculties and capacity for fulfilling our obligations. Every mother whose

mind is sound, is called upon to perform the duties of a mother; and without any better guide than her own reason and attention, she will soon perceive that something more is required, than merely watching over the preservation of her children. I am, and I wish to remain, a stranger to that humility which represses, as beyond me, all that is arduous and praise-worthy. I believe, that by applying my heart to wisdom, I may become wise; and the mother who diligently watches over the first openings of moral existence in the beings entrusted to her, will soon discover, that she has the necessary talents for governing them safely. Attention and experience will enlighten her; and should she never reach to the accomplishment of all she wishes, she will at least secure to herself the favour of God, and her own peace of mind. It pleases me, my Lucy, to look forward to that period, when, with the name of Hardcastle, I may be treading

in the same path of duty which our mother pursued in her road to Heaven. Will you wish me to suppress my hopes, that I may one day be able, with the pure joy of an accepted spirit in her abode of bliss, to point to her those inmates, whom her virtues trained for happiness ? Yet why this tear ? I cannot erase the blot it has made. Wherefore is it that my spirit faints ? You must come and chide me ; you will find me paler and thinner than when I last saw you ; and, it may be, less the heroine, since there has been less to oppose me. But I hate *sea voyages* !

Oh sweet Valentine ! hasten to us ! hasten and bring to me my Lucy ! thou shalt then be crowned as the harbinger of spring and Horace. Tell my "lily," that we expect no tears nor sighs. She is desired to wear the same face she did with her *lilac ribbands*. We are all learning to be philosophers, except Malcolm, who is daily in danger of losing his good humour ;

and rates the work people for not being at Wenland, at the same time that they are here. I believe in my conscience that Miss Hardcastle and Miss Howard might sleep in the stable for him. But we do not mind his *pouling*; and your apartment, which was Miss Flint's, is to be made worthy of the captain's guests. Adieu, my dear girl; the good people here send their blessings with

RACHEL COWLEY'S.

CHAP. XIII.

LETTER LXXVI.

From Miss Cowley to Miss Hardcastle.

January 24.

MY dear Lucy will not expect to find me in the broad road of folly and laughter, with so many admonitions of wisdom as I have of late been favoured with ; I repeat the word *favoured* ; for poor and weak must be the mind which does not profit from such lessons as I have had to study ! Do not, however, take the alarm ; I hope, I shall escape dullness, although I am become somewhat graver than in the days of

my flippancy, and *rude* health. My poor Horace ! But I dare not trust myself with the subject ! But is it not wonderful that no one can be found to comfort the Earl of S——, but his son's friend, whose heart is pierced with an anguish as bitter and acute as his own ! I am selfish, I am ashamed to tell you that I am become fretful and nervous. You must come, my Lucy ; I want you to sustain and to chide me. My spirits are weakened, and my mind is assailed by apprehensions which I dare not give to you. This news from Lisbon has been hurtful to me. I send you enclosed a letter which may make you smile : it did not move a muscle in my face. Lady Maclairn undertook to reply to it for me. She was obliged to answer a letter of condolence which Mrs. Serge thought it polite to send to her " dear cousin." I believe her ladyship hazarded to give her correspondent a little wholesome advice, which will be well for her

if she understands its value. Mrs. Heartley has received letters from her son Henry; he is coming home. His friend's death, with his dying advice to the young man, make only a part of those motives which induce Henry to quit his present situation. Mr. Bembridge, the deceased, has left him an estate in Berkshire of three hundred pounds *per annum*; and Henry wisely thinks, that with this provision and Mary Howard, he shall be as rich as a Nabob, with a ruined constitution, and twenty lacks of rupees. "He will have letters before he embarks, which will dash from his lips this cup of happiness," observed the anxious mother. "Miss Howard is now in a very different situation from that, under which my poor boy vowed to live, and to labour for her. I would not on any account have the captain made acquainted with my son's hopes. He thinks Henry is right to return home; but I now wish him to remain where he is for a few

years." "Leave him to Providence," replied I, "and enjoy the blessings before you. Alice will be soon happy, and who knows whether one wedding may not be followed by another? a little money will not spoil Mary Howard, or change Captain Flint's nature." "I shall take care," observed she thoughtfully, "to prevent Henry from coming hither; I wish Alice were settled, I should immediately go to town, and wait there for my son's arrival." Cannot you, Lucy, find out whether Mary's *colour* is yet *lilac*. Alice thinks it is; but we may be conjecturing on false grounds; for Alice Heartley and Rachel Cowley are very simple girls; yet I do believe the captain wishes to see Henry united to him by the tenderest ties. He even proposed the other day to Malcolm to wait for his brother's arrival before he married. Malcolm smiled; but declined the advice.

You saw enough of our doctor, when you were at Farefield, to enter into the spirit of my allusion, when I call him the sun which cheers us. We may say with truth that we live in his smiles. Should you fancy this expression too poetical to suit with Douglass's stern face, it is because you have not seen him when with a patient who he thinks wants comfort more than medicine. Did they inform you that he never quitted my room during six and thirty hours? Horace will love him, Lucy, and you will be grateful. Amongst other ingenious hypotheses which he maintained this morning was one that will please you; for he proved to demonstration that Miss Cowley "had the strength of a horse." He has been scolding me for this last hour; and has provoked me to laugh at him and myself.

Oh! how tedious are the hours till I hear from you. Mrs. Allen sends her good wishes with your

RACHEL COWLEY'S.

P. S. I am well, quite well, Lucy ! my cordial in my bosom ! Do not mind a word in this letter. Douglass will triumph. He predicted how it would be ; when the wind blew propitiously.

LETTER LXXVII.

From Mrs. Serge to Miss Cowley.

MY DEAR MISS COWLEY,

IT would give me inexpressible concern, could I for a moment believe that you “ himagine” I have forgotten you, or the promise I made you, when at Farefield Hall. You can be no stranger to the “ hevents” which have taken place in my family since that time ; and of course these

will account to you for my "happarent" neglect. I have endeavoured to practise what I preach, which is more, as Mrs. Dangle says, than *manny* who are paid for preaching do; for, as I have said in my letter to Lady Maclairn, I see that nothing good comes from sorrowing for those who are removed from this world. Death is appointed for all; and the best thing we can do is to submit to the loss of our friends and relations, who are summoned away before us. I dare say the death of Mr. Flamall has made her ladyship very unhappy, but time will restore her spirits, unless she do as my Jerry "*do*," yield to grief, and mope in her room. My kind friend, Mrs. Dangle, would not permit me to remain at Putney, where it was impossible I could have recovered my spirits. She has a charming house in the Haymarket; and since I have been her guest, I am much better; and indeed should be quite well, were it not for the vexation

Nora "give" me. You will be quite astonished to see the *halteration* a few months of matrimony "have" made in her ; and it will give you a dread of love matches ! But I would not discourage you. Nora "have" only to thank herself for all that "have" happened to disturb her. Captain Fairly is not to blame, because his wife is jealous ; nor Mrs. Dangle, because her constant good humour "make" her the favourite with *hevery* gentleman. But Nora was always perverse in her temper ! she can be heasy no where now, but at Putney. When single, she detested the place. She have been very ill ; and her disappointment have perhaps made her lower in spirits ; but, as I tell her, " the worse luck now, the better in future." She may have children enow by the time she is forty.

I hope, my dear Miss Cowley, nothing will prevent your visit to me in February. Captain Fairly has, very politely, offered to be your escort, and desires me to assure

you, that he will, with the utmost pleasure, come to Farefield to fetch you, if you will permit him to have that honour; but I conclude you will not be allowed to leave Mrs. Allen behind you; so that you will *happoint* the captain to meet you on the road. I shall be very happy to see Mrs. Allen. She will be nice company for Mr. Serge, in our absence. I promise you, nothing shall be omitted for your amusement. Mrs. Dangle is quite in polite life; and she engages to “*hintroduce*” you every where. You will meet the best company at her table; for her husband is never happy without society. There is a Major Ogle in love with you only from description. He says, that I have entangled his heart, and that he must be our shadow; therefore, we shall not want for a beau, nor one that half the women in London are dying for.

I would advise you not to make up any thing when you are for your journey; it

would be only so much labour lost. But it may not be amiss for you to begin to accustom yourself to fewer petticoats. We wear here only one. But we have found out ways and means to obviate the mischief of going unclothed, and we contrive to keep ourselves warm; but this, as Mrs. Dangle says, is a secret *haunter nu*; for if the gentlemen knew you were in the habit of wearing small clothes whilst single, they might fear for their privileges when you married. You will be delighted with this charming woman. She is the counter-part of you, only she has seen more of polite life, since her marriage, than you have been in the way of seeing at Farefield; which, to say the truth, is a sad place for such a young lady as Miss Cowley.

I remain in the expectation of hearing from you the time fixed for seeing you; and I shall be impatient till I can show you that I am your affectionate friend,

LYDIA SERGE.

P. S. You need not be under any fear of meeting that disgrace to me, Lydia. I have not seen her since her leaving Putney, nor will I ever again *hacknowledge* her as my child. Jerry may be as obstinate as he please. So will I, on this point. You will be astonished to hear, that he have set up the feller who married her like a gentleman, and even sent down a post-chay for his lady's use. I see into this malice. It is all done to spite the captain, whom he hate. I am sorry to say, Nora's foolish complaints have done no good. I am sure, I can see nothing in the captain that would not please any reasonable woman; and to me, his behaviour is always *hattentive* and *respectful*. You need not shew this letter to my cousin; Sir Murdoch have made her quite a *methodist*.

What a shocking end Flamall have made! But he was always as proud as Lucifer.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

HAVING faithfully performed my pleasing task, and exerted my best abilities to recommend myself to my readers, I do honestly confess, that I am gratified by finding that something remains, in which my services may be useful to their curiosity. Except two letters, from Miss Cowley to her correspondents at Heathcot, nothing appears of sufficient consequence to this work, they being confined solely to Miss Hardcastle's and Miss Howard's journey to Farefield; which they reached in the month of February.

It remains with me, consequently to supply a few pages to this, otherwise

abrupt conclusion of a work, already reprehensible in the critic's eye.

My readers may be able to recollect the name of Montrose, the early friend of Mr. Philip Flint, who, with his sister, the wife of Mr. Lindsey, shared in his confidence, with the truth and ardour of youthful zeal and friendship, during his progress to Miss Sinclair's heart.

To this gentleman am I at present indebted for a situation in life which I would not exchange for the most brilliant which this world has to give. For I am sheltered from "the proud man's contumely," and "the pang which the worthy of the unworthy takes." I was in my friend's hospitable house at the shocking termination of Mr. Flamall's life. This event produced many changes in favour of those, to whom he had been more obnoxious than useful. My brother Lindsey, was immediately placed in Mr. Flamall's office, as this regarded Miss Cowley's

property on the island; and Mr. Flint, with Counsellor Steadman's advice and concurrence, relieved her, by an appeal to Chancery, from the restrictive clauses in her father's will, they being her appointed guardians until she was of age.

In the mean time, I was judged capable of educating the young Cowley's. Their gentle and interesting mother had formed an intimacy with my sister Lindsey, during the time they resided under the same roof, at Mr. Dalrymple's; and to judge of the future by the present, these friends will never have but one and the same roof.

In the hours of confidence, which succeeded to their first acquaintance, Marian informed Mrs. Lindsey, of her motives for withdrawing from Mr. Flamall's authority and power, by quitting an abode she loved. He had importuned her with his passion even before Mr. Cowley's death; and she held him in abhorrence and terror. She made no doubt of the il-

legality of Mr. Cowley's will, he having repeatedly told her, that she would find a protector and a guardian for her sons in Mr. Oliver Flint; and from the moment she was informed of Mr. Flamall's authority, she determined never to lose sight of her children. Mr. Philip Flint befriended her, because Juba had told him that I was afraid of his uncle. Her entire concurrence in committing her children to my care; her confidence in my integrity, led her cheerfully to part with them, and we reached England in safety; where my trust was sanctioned by their expecting sister and maternal friend.

From that hour I have experienced the comforts of a home, endeared to me by all that can give zest to rational pleasure with an undepraved heart. Montrose was understood as a man to be trusted; although, to say the truth, my friends appear to be governed by motives, not un-

like Bassanio, when he decides on the casket.—

“Thou meagre lead,
Which rather threat’nest than dost promise aught;
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence,
And here I chuse.”

In giving up to my discretion her correspondence with Miss Hardcastle, during her residence at Farefield, Mrs. Hardcastle added those occurrences which had taken place after the day which terminated “her captivity.” “You will easily believe,” said she smiling, “that Counsellor Steadman was as ready to resign the heir-ess, as I was to be rid of the plagues of heirship; but Alice was a wife before I left the hall; and, my dear Lady Mac-lairn was obliged to confess, that life has its blessings; and, that the human heart can never want an inlet to joy, until it has banished affection for others. She was right in saying this; and she knows, and feels it to be truth. Mary has neither

changed her *colours* nor her *mind* with her fortune, and her uncle prefers Henry Heartley to a rich baronet. We shall see these *true* lovers united," added she, "when at Farefield; and then Sir Murdoch and his lady, will quit the hall for Wenland Place; where, I confidently hope, they will find a home of uninterrupted repose.

"The Duke of S——," continued Mrs. Hardcastle, "finding that my Horace had enough of the good things of this world; and, well knowing, he had a recompence in store for himself in Heaven, contrived to be useful to Mr. Sedley, and by his *interest*, procured for him a valuable crown living; and with his *money* secured to him the parish, of which his uncle is the pastor, and he still the curate." "Such, Mr. Montrose," added she, with seriousness, "is the present state and condition of those persons, in whose happiness you are so interested, and in whose sorrows, you

have taken so lively a concern. If, as you say, the whole tissue of events before you have confirmed you in your belief of a retributive justice, it is well : as it is displayed in this scene of action, it may be useful to others ; although I am of opinion, that not a day passes, that does not add to our conviction, that the sinner is taken in his own snare, and the virtuous kept from falling by a power beyond our finite reason. But as your intention and labour will have little aid from fiction, let your fidelity, as an historian, compensate for the absence of the marvellous. Do not omit to say, that Philip Flint and Malcolm Maclairn are brothers, whose hearts are not divided by the ocean which separates them. They live in hopes of being re-united ; but Mr. Flint has inherited from his grandfather so strong a predilection in favour of the island of Jamaica, that it would not surprise me, if he remained there until he could man a ship

with his own boys, and freight it with Sinclairs and Lindseys. I am not quite so solicitous on this subject, as Malcolm," added she, "we are happy *now* at Wenland place : besides, let us be content. I do not wish my deputy, your sister, to be deserted. She is kind and gentle to my numerous dependents ; and *Lindsey* is the *sweetener* to the sugar he sends us. Heaven be praised," continued she, "Cowley's slaves are yet cherished as men, though unfortunate men ! *But I hate the subject.*"

To these instructions I have paid due obedience ; but I have passed some weeks at Farefield Hall since writing the above.

And I think it will be no matter of surprise, much less of censure, that I should indulge myself with a supernumerary page or two, for the sole purpose of paying my tribute of respect to a character so much distinguished by Miss Cowley, in her let-

ters to her friend. Mr. Serge was not forgotten by her, when she became Mrs. Hardcastle. "You will see my favourite when you go to Farefield, said she, "and you will judge of my hasty sketches of the most simple-hearted man who lives. Supported by the rectitude of his own mind, and a piety which rests solely on the goodness of God, he has sustained very severe trials, with a patience and resignation that ought to put philosophy to the blush. The loss of his favourite daughter, the prop of his comforts, was followed by the death of Mrs. Fairly, who, in consequence of a severe cold taken at a place of public amusement, to which she was reluctantly hurried, after an indisposition of a dangerous kind, fell into a rapid decline, and was consigned to the grave before she was one and twenty. Her, giddy, thoughtless mother was at this melancholy period on a tour of pleasure with Mrs. Dangle, recently become a widow; and Captain

Fairly, with another military beau were their escorts.

Poor Mr. Serge, assisted by his friends the Tomkins's, supported this scene, and without designing to write to his unfeeling son, or to his foolish misled wife, sheltered his sorrows at his daughter Mrs. Willet's, leaving to the public papers to announce to the travellers the event, which they might have foreseen before they left home. "But the claims of the disconsolate widow, Mrs. Dangle, could not be overlooked." Mr. Maclairn and his wife joined the dejected Mr. Serge at his daughter Willet's; and by diverting his thoughts to the final establishment of this child, they had the satisfaction of seeing him improve in health and spirits. He had not, however, lost his resentment in regard to his wife's desertion; but with firmness declared, that he meant to give up his house at Putney, and to live remote from London. With these resolutions he returned

to town; and it appears that he was steady. The lady returned also from her excursion, somewhat humbled by the reception he gave her; and probably, shocked by the death of her child, she made concessions which failed in their effect; for she would not submit to give up her dear Mrs. Dangle, nor refuse Captain Fairly's visits—points *obstinately* enforced by her husband. He again returned to Mrs. Willet's, and found consolation. His grandson amused him; and “honest William,” as he calls Mr. Willet, hourly rose in his estimation. Some months passed: he resolutely refused to return home, without an assurance that he should find his wife willing to give up her son, Fairly, and Mrs. Dangle's society. But this poor, weak, and misguided woman, had too promptly acquired the lessons they had taught her; and she was hastening on to destruction, when an accident deprived her of life. A Major Ogle, who had his hopes and projects,

flattered by the age and vexations “ of the rich old taylor,” drove one morning Mrs. Serge an airing in his tandem from Dangle Park, leaving his friend the noble Captain Fairly to amuse Mrs. Dangle. Though a proficient in gallantry and gaming, the major could not manage two high fed and spirited horses. Some linen drying on a hedge by a cottage, frightened the leader ; he became ungovernable, the carriage was upset, and Mrs. Serge received a blow on the temple from the horse’s foot, which killed her on the spot ; her admirer was quit with a broken arm. Mr. Serge received the intelligence of this shocking accident with silent sorrow : he took to his bed, and Malcolm was soon his nurse. “ I have outlived my feelings !” said the poor man to him ; “ I dare not tell you what are my thoughts at this hour ; but I sometimes think, it would be sinful to sorrow, for the loss of a woman, who, had she lived, would have lived only to have

disgraced herself. She is taken from the evil company of those who have perverted her simplicity, and made her the laugh of their dissolute hours. But the day will come, when they will remember having corrupted innocence, and misled ignorance : her cause, and mine will be heard at a tribunal, they will tremble to approach." He now determined on his plans for his future life, and with his usual munificence left his house and furniture at Putney for Mrs. Tomkins's use ; and he has from that time resided at Mr. Wilson's, in Captain Flint's deserted apartments ; where, in the comforts of a family attached to him, and in the society of Mrs. Heartley, who still lives at the Abbey, he is cheerful and contented. " When you know him," continued Mrs. Hardcastle, " it will not surprise you to find him, treated by his friends with an affectionate fondness, resembling that which is given to a cherished child ; but although he

may be called the pest of every house he frequents, such is the genuine goodness of his nature, that indulgence cannot make him forward or capricious. He does not even claim the respect due to his age and station ; and whilst the poor around him regard him as their tutelary divinity, they love him as a neighbour, and he converses with them like one. His loquacity will amuse you, for he may be said to think aloud ; and his gratitude to those who, in his own words, “ are kind to him,” is displayed by the minutest attention to their ease. Though he greatly prefers an open carriage to a coach, he keeps one because his *ladies* want it in bad weather ;” and Mrs. Wilson is not permitted to take cold when she goes to church, for he insists on using it as a *family convenience*.”

My recommendations were too powerful to be overlooked by Mr. Serge. We were intimate friends in an hour ; and it has been a source both of satisfaction and curiosity to me, to profit from the frank-

ness and openness of a mind so uncommon. I have seen that the encroachments of age and natural infirmities may find a barrier, without the aid of philosophy, and that in a cheerful piety a man may find a safe refuge from the cold apathy and querulous temper of near fourscore years, without other aid than his Bible, and a good heart.

Our conversations are long, though desultory. He frequently, however, talks of his past sorrows and troubles. Speaking of his daughter, *Mrs. Fairly*, he observed, "that from the time she married, she resembled a poor unfledged bird, who had been ensnared within sight of the nest, and the wing which had cherished her." "Poor thing," added he, "she told me once that *her husband* had taught her to love me." I spoke of his satisfaction in regard to Mr. Willet, with whom Mr. Maclairn was so pleased. "Yes," replied he, "thank God, Lydia is the wife of an honest man. I do not wish him to be such

a gentleman as Fairly. Plain cloth suits me, Mr. Montrose : I have worn no other, since I was born ; except the trimmings are, like Malcolm's, of pure gold, they are not ornamental in my opinion : tinsel may decorate a fool, and set off a knave, whilst it lasts ; but it will be for a very little time. Mark what I tell you ; Fairly will die in in a goal ; and his wife, late Mrs. Dangle, will want bread, and pity into the bargain. But I forgive them ; it is my duty ; and like all my Master's burthens, easy ; for what should I gain by being unforgiving ?

The other day he with much jocularly asked me whether the witnessing so much of conjugal felicity had not put matrimony into my head ? I replied, that, on the contrary, it would probably stamp me a batchelor for life. " How so," asked he, " Why," answered I, " I see that in this lottery of life, there are some capital prizes ; but I am too poor to hazard any part of my fund of present happiness, lest I spend

my money for a blank, and I am become too ambitious to be contented with a petty prize." He laughed, warning me, that I might change my mind. "For such things do happen," continued he; "at your age I was in no hurry to marry, yet when turned of forty, I married, without consulting my register, or my reason. My good aunt who lived with me, perceived, I suppose, that I was thinking of changing my condition, and she was much pleased; recommending perpetually to my notice, a very worthy young woman of her acquaintance; but I know not how it fell out, after seeing two or three times my poor, artless, good humoured Lydia, I was not easy in my mind; and thought my aunt's favourite, Miss Welldon, looked of a fretful temper, and was of too ceremonious a turn for me; though she was comely, and only six and thirty, which certainly was a more suitable age for mine, and I might have been comfortable with her. I soon found that Lydia was too

young a wife for me," continued he, thoughtfully, "but I loved her, and I well knew what kindness would do with her. She was contented, and all was peace with us, till she was perverted by bad company. Whenever, you marry, Mr. Montrose, take care to know what company the lady keeps; much depends on that; and avoid a disproportion in years: there is hazard in trusting too much, in some cases."

He is very curious in his questions relative to my two pupils, who are his favourites. "It is all in good time yet," observed he, "but we must be careful not to neglect our blessings. My grandson, Jerry, is a fine boy, and little William very active and promising. Their mother is an excellent *nurse*, and Mrs. Maclairn was quite surprised at seeing her a notable housewife. She has been favoured, Mr. Montrose. There is a curate and his wife near them, that are invaluable to these young people; and I will take care

that their goodness shall not be lost. But poor Lydia must not be trusted with my boys too long. Happily she promises to be a "fruitful vine." So the nursing will be transferred. I mean to give my children a *good education*, Mr. Montrose. It shall not be my fault, if they lack knowledge. I cannot reproach myself with having wilfully neglected my duty ; but with a more enlarged knowledge I might have performed it better, and shunned many errors in conduct. I have, of late, been of opinion, that I had, in common with other men better instructed, a capacity that might have been improved by learning ; and I will tell you the reason for this seeming presumption," added he, suddenly stopping and facing me ; " it is this : that, although I cannot talk, nor argue like you, and our friends within, yet I very often comprehend the drift of your discourse, and am entertained by your debates." Before I could make any answer to this observation, Mr. Hard-

castle called him, and reminded him of the dampness of the evening, adding, that he was waited for at the loo-table. He nodded in sign of obedience, and said to me, "you may think I am vain, but I must tell you, that I perceive what has brought *pam* into favour here ; I see all the kindness of their good hearts ! It is well for me that I know that my debts of gratitude will be discharged in full by One who is able to pay them." He entered the house, and with bustling cheerfulness claimed his privilege of sitting next Mrs. Hardcastle.

Should these touches of my pencil be judged injurious to a portrait already so faithfully delineated by a more skillful hand, I have only to request the censurer to place the mistake, and others as glaring, to my account, and to separate them from the labours of a copyist, whose sole merit is confined to a diligent and honest purpose ; and whose simplicity of heart has, in the presence of the unlearned Mr.

Serge, a hundred times pronounced, that learning would not have added one line to his stature.

“An honest man’s the noblest work of God.”

It is now more than three years since my manuscript has been in my writing desk. Already has time shadowed off a portion of those vivid colours, with which my picture of Farefield Hall then glared. The death of Lady Maclairn this spring, has saddened every heart; whilst, from her dying lessons and calm resignation, have resulted a consolation which all have found useful. Sir Murdoch yielded to Mrs. Hardcastle’s entreaties, to join her in London soon after this melancholy event. Again has she been to him the “angel of peace,” and, with renewed health and spirits, he accompanied the family to Heathcot in June.

It is at Heathcot, according to Sir Murdoch’s opinion, that Mrs. Hardcastle must be seen, in order to be justly viewed. I think as he does; for it is here, and here

only, that the vivacity and brilliancy of her mind, appear to yield to the satisfactions of her heart. She is always amiable; but *at Heathcot* she is more placid, more affectionate, and, to use her own words, “never from home.”

I conceived, that this was the season for renewing my petition relative to her and Mr. Hardcastle's letters. I could not succeed. She saw that I was disappointed. “Be comforted,” said she smiling; “I will, if you please, formally announce to the public, what will satisfy half your readers, as well as the best written love letters extant. I can assert, that Horace Hardcastle is still obstinate in error; and that he yet worships the idol formed by his own hand; an acquaintance with its defects, serves only to augment his attachment, for he pretends to find, even in these, grounds for his faith and motives for his love.”

“But do you not see?” observed I, “how much my moral must lose in its

moral design, by the omission of such letters as yours and Mr. Hardcastle's? A passion built on so noble a basis!"—— She interrupted me. "Enough has appeared," said she, "to justify my preference and affection for my husband. My principle of conduct is at the service of my sex. The young cannot adopt a better. The moment they know, that every approach to vice and libertinism is contagious, they will shun them, however decorated; and when they know, that by marrying a fool, their own gold will be mingled with an alloy which must sink its value and obscure its brightness, they will be safe, and preserve a heart worthy of a good husband."

"I cannot help having my fears," said I, rising, somewhat discomfited, and taking up my manuscript. "It is so unlike the popular novels of the day."——"What should you fear?" replied she, with eagerness. "Why, misses, in their teens

"write novels and publish them. They do nothing of it." I laughed, and only wished, that I had their youth and vigour to plead for my folly and failures.

"Nonsense," cried she, laughing. "In my turn, I was speaking of their *courage*, not of their performances. Imitate them, at least in your good opinion, of your own talents; and should you, like them, find you have over-rated your abilities, settle the business, like our friend Sancho Panza; and say, "*que Sancho écuyer cru bien aussi vite en Paradis, que Sancho gouverneur.*" My father, and the *mother of this family*, as you justly stile Mrs. Allen, wish you to print your work. They think your *secret* worth knowing, and we admire the skill and discretion, with which you have contrived to divulge it, with usefulness to all, and without wounding any. I bowed, and have obeyed.

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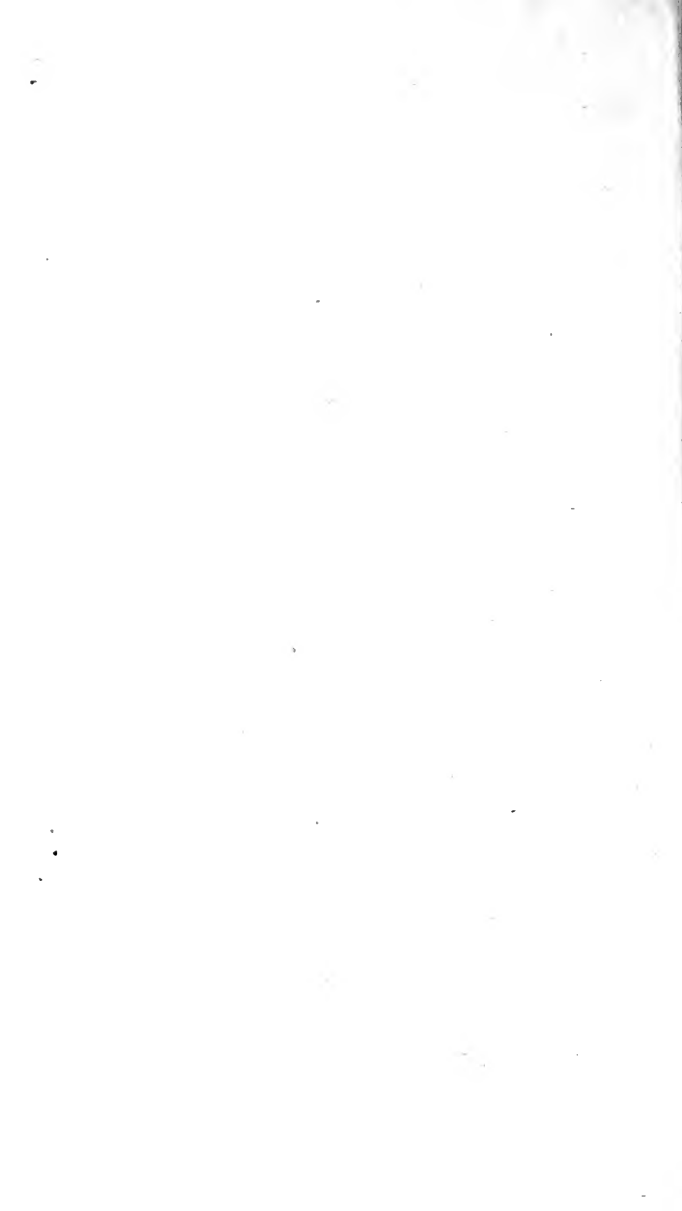
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